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ABSTRACT

The Newspaper section, Part 1 of the proceedings contains the following selected papers: "Gatekeeping and the Editorial Cartoon: A Case Study of the 2000 Presidential Campaign Cartoons" (Jennifer M. Proffitt); "Campaign Contributions: Online Newspapers Go Beyond Shovelware in Covering Election 2000" (Jane B. Singer); "At Play in the Field of the Word: A Content Analysis of the Coverage of Women's Sports in Selected San Francisco Bay Area Newspapers" (Greg Mellen and Patricia Colemen); "An Explorative Study on the Market Relationship Between Online and Print Newspapers" (Hsiang Iris Chyi and Dominic L. Lasorsa); "Official Sources, Embedded Perspective and News Frameworks: How Two Korean Newspapers Covered a Public Health Crisis" (Robert A. Logan, Jaeyung Park, and Jae-Hwa Shin); "Numbers in the News: A Mathematics Audit of a Daily Newspaper" (Scott R. Maier); "Newsroom Numeracy: A Case Study of Mathematical Competence and Confidence" (Scott R. Maier); "Social Construction of Depression in Newspaper Frames" (Cynthia-Lou Coleman and Jessica A. Corbitt); " 'Still Shocking, But No Longer Surprising': The Anomaly Paradox in Newspaper Coverage of the 1997-1998 School Shootings" (Russell Frank); "Creating New Value for Copy Editing Instruction in the Curriculum and the University" (Ann E. Auman, Frank E. Fee, Jr., and John T. Russial); "Back to the Future? Teaching Copy Editing Skills in Changing Times" (Frank Fee, John Russial, and Ann Auman); "Convenient Excuses? Jobs, Classes, and Misconceptions Limit JMC Students' Involvement in Major" (Betsy Alderman and Fred Fedler); "The Aesthetics of Work: A Case Study on How Faculty and Students Negotiate Quality in the Newsroom" (Beverly Horvit); "Newspapers in the Age of the Internet: Adding Interactivity to Objectivity" (John L. "Jack" Morris); "Connecting with the New Culture: Trade-Press Readership among Copy Editors and Their Supervisors" (Frannk E. Fee, Jr.); A Comparative Analysis of On-line versus Print Media: Readability and Content Difference of Business News" (Jaemin Jung and Samsup Jo); "Copy Flow at Small Newspapers: Lessons for Metros Seeking Change?" (Judy Gibbs Robinson); and

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"The Scope and Nature of Newspaper in Education Programs: A National Survey" (Patrick C. Meirick and Daniel J. Sullivan). (RS)

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Running head: GATEKEEPING AND EDITORIAL CARTOONS

Gatekeeping and the Editorial Cartoon: A Case Study of the 2000 Presidential Campaign Cartoons

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Abstract

This case study explores gatekeeping studies and the political editorial cartoon, comparing the experiences of editorial cartoonists with gatekeeping research findings and examining how standardization and conservative news policies appear to apply to editorial cartoons pertaining to the 2000 presidential campaign published in The Denver Post. Sixty-nine cartoons were analyzed and compared to the 155 select articles concerning the 2000 presidential campaign. This exploration also discusses The Post's endorsement of Vice President Gore and its possible effect on choice and content of cartoons.

Gatekeeping and the Editorial Cartoon: An Exploration of the 2000 Presidential Campaign Cartoons

From the revolutionary time of Benjamin Franklin, hailed as the first American political cartoonist, to the 2000 election, political editorial cartoons have been fixtures in newspapers. As Somers (1998) stated, American editorial cartoonists reflect the social and political "moods of the nation, refining and simplifying their work to insure the maximum impact on a public with little time to ponder the complex drawings and lengthy captions of earlier times" (pp. ix-x). The political editorial cartoon should crystallize the issues of the day in humorous illustrations, which is significant in a time when many Americans have little time to spend reading a newspaper in depth.

The ideal role of the political cartoonist is to comment, through humor and sarcasm, on issues and events that occur in American society. According to Spencer (1949), "One of the big jobs of the editorial cartoonist is to pack his panel with punch…make his editorial message smack the reader in the eye" (p. 3). And according to Press (1981), political cartoons seek "to do more than amuse or make one sigh out a 'Well, that's life'; it tries to influence the viewer to a particular viewpoint and predispose him or her to a particular action" (p. 13). However, due to standardization of news and cartoons, the proliferation of the conservative ideals of newspaper owners and editors (gatekeepers), and economic and political pressures, the editorial cartoon does not have the "punch" it carried in Ben Franklin's time. This case study will first explore the functions of editorial cartoons, comparing the experiences of the political cartoonist with the findings in gatekeeping studies conducted by mass media scholars. This exploration also will examine and describe how these concerns apply to the cartoons published in The Denver Post pertaining to the 2000 presidential campaign; the study also will try to identify possible effects of newspaper endorsements of political candidates on political cartoons.

Gatekeeping and the Editorial Cartoon

According to Somers (1998), newspaper cartooning evolved gradually. Editorial cartoons were regularly featured in newspapers throughout the country by the turn of the century, and this "proliferation so alarmed the politicians who were the target of these drawings that between 1897 and 1915 the legislatures of California, Pennsylvania, Alabama, and New York formulated anti-cartoon legislation" (Somers, 1998, p. 13). As Harrison (1981) stated, those in power have traditionally feared political cartoons for at least three reasons: "(a) the cartoon's savage ability to depict in unflattering caricature; (b) the cartoon's ability to crystallize complex issues into a simple metaphor, a mobilizing call for action; and (c) the cartoon's availability, even to those who may not be especially literate or politically aware" (p. 14).

By World War I, radical cartoonists' work appeared in alternative newspapers and magazines because their uncompromising political positions were unacceptable to mainstream press (Somers, 1998). By the 1970s, syndication became the norm.

The standardization of the political cartoon is similar to the findings of gatekeeper studies. According to Breed (1955a), several factors contribute to the standardization of news: "wire services and syndicates, supplying different papers with identical material in great quantities; publicity handouts distributed widely; chain ownership, and the tendency of most publishers to maintain a conservative political policy" (p. 277). Furthermore, according to Grossberg, Wartella, and Whitney (1998), journalists are constrained by the values they share for what news is, and each works for an organization with routines that also confine what news is.

According to Hess (1996), "As technology widened the reach of communications, increased the costs of acquiring or starting media enterprises, and expanded the potential profits, the news business in the twentieth century followed some of the same tendencies toward greater consolidation that can be seen in other major industries, such as automobiles and oil" (p. 7). In

1900, 10 percent of the national daily circulation was controlled by the eight largest newspaper companies; in the 1990s, more than 70 percent of daily newspapers in the United States were owned by business groups, and the 20 largest companies owned a total of 502 newspapers, thus contributing to the effects of news standardization (Hess, 1996).

As Krieghbaum (1956) stated, increased standardization of the press in the United States was blamed for what Professor Henry Ladd Smith of the University of Wisconsin considered the decline of political cartooning in the 1950s. By the 1970s, according the Hess and Kaplan (1975), most newspapers purchased their political cartoons from a syndicate rather than supplying their own talent, contributing to the proliferation of standardization of political editorial cartoons.

Breed (1955b) also stated than conservative editors "set news policy, and this policy is usually followed by members of his staff" (p. 326). New reporters are socialized, internalizing his/her obligations to the paper and the norms and values of the newsroom (Breed, 1955b). As Gans (1980) stated, organization-wide pressures for conformity maintain the power of editors.

Like journalists, political cartoonists also feel the pressure to conform to the conservative policies set by editors and owners of newspapers. As Spencer (1949) stated, new cartoonists are concerned with turning in work that is acceptable to the editor. Furthermore, according to Press (1981), political cartoonists, "either from weariness or intimidation, may be tempted, or may unconsciously begin to second-guess the editor" (p. 186). Cartoonists quickly discover what editors prefer. As Press (1981) stated, "Just as knowledgeable pitchers discovered that it was unproductive to serve up low and outside fast balls to Lou Gehrig, so cartoonists may learn to avoid certain offerings to editors, perhaps--and this is the ultimate horror to some--without even in time being consciously aware when they are falling into the habit of doing so" (p. 186).

Some cartoonists, however, are aware of these pressures to conform. In an interview reported in Sewell (1996), Milt Priggee of the Spokeman-Review stated, "All your questions are predicated on the assumption that cartoonists are allowed to view the presidential campaign through their own eyes unfiltered through the fear of the end of the line of their own jobs, careers, and dreams AND of the profession itself" (p. 174).

Furthermore, Whitney and Becker (1983) found that local media are influenced by the decisions of relatively few editors who operate at regional, national, and international wire service bureaus. Berkowitz (1990) found that "some decision-makers explained that national trends (often appearing in USA Today stories) were an important consideration for topic selection" (p. 63). As Wilhoit and Drew (1991) discovered, the majority of editorials in their 1988 study of editorial writers appeared to be on non-local issues; almost 80 percent of the writers in their study ranked news as the number one source of their editorials. And, as gatekeeping studies have found, the news is a matter of choice; what is reported and what is omitted is filtered through gatekeepers.

According to Press (1981), some editorial cartoonists get their cartoon themes handed to them from the editorial board; therefore, the artist is only one of several contributors to the cartoon outcome. Similarly, Harrison (1981) stated that editorial cartoonists usually work with the editorial page editor or with a board of editors; some cartoonists have a relatively free hand to draw what they wish; others submit a number of ideas each day and the editor chooses one.

In addition, because newspapers have become big business, those journalists and political cartoonists who do not conform to the newspaper policy will feel pressure because "in a clash of opinions between boss and employee, as in other fields the boss's opinion generally prevails, through the sheer force of logic--economic logic, that is" (p. 187). In Parenti's (1993) discussion of gatekeepers, he stated that editors must conform to the "judgments of the corporate directors and owners who exercise financial power over the organization and, if they so choose, final judgment over the news itself and over who is hired or fired at lower levels" (p. 34).

Gatekeepers, then, make decisions based on what the owners of the newspaper decide is newspaper policy because profit is the bottom line. As Sigal (1973) stated, "Newspapers are business firms trying to turn a profit. They compete with other newspapers and news media in two oligopolistic markets--one for the sale of news and the other for the sale of advertising space. How well they do in the first market affects how well they do in the second over the long run" (p. 8).

According to Parenti (1993), owners must not offend large financial interests, including advertisers. The media are thus manipulated by advertisers to maintain a conservative news and editorial policy. As Parenti stated (1993), "Because they pay the bills, advertisers regard their influence over media content as something of a 'right.' And media executives seem to agree" (p. 35). Gatekeepers are aware of this influence; therefore, they choose stories and cartoons that will not offend those who pay their salary. As Sewell (1996) stated, in a time of tight financial constraints, controversial topics should be avoided. This influence also affects political cartoonists such as Priggee who stated:

> The cartoonists are becoming cynical as the voters already have. Along with this political system chance, the media is changing also. Meaning newspapers no longer want to be newspapers. They want to be the friends of all the special interest groups which means they would rather kiss up to whatever low-life group that approaches them instead of sticking up for the principles of what a newspaper is all about…Cartoonists no longer deal with politics or issues...they deal with survival, plain and simple (Sewell, 1996, p. 174).

Editorial cartoonists experience other pressures to conform as well. According to Somers (1998), "In the early 1990s, issues of censorship often came under the catch phrase 'Political Correctness.' To members of a profession whose job it is to offend everyone, any increase in public sensitivity is cause for concern" (p. 28). Gatekeepers must be sensitive to the "needs" of the audience, including advertisers, politicians, and big business, and any offensive material is discarded. Editorial cartoonists have therefore increasingly emphasized humor rather than biting social or political commentary.

Editors also have become more sensitive to the litigious nature of American society. According to Somers (1998), "Although no editorial cartoonist to date has lost a libel suit, the mere frequency of their filing is becoming a factor for both editors and cartoonists to consider" (pp. 25-26). Legal suits are worrisome to editors and cartoonists because the time and cost of defending against suits intimidate many publishers, which would influence the gatekeepers to take extra care choosing cartoons that do not offend any member of the newspaper's audience. As Somers (1998) stated, "Editors must pick and choose among syndicated writers and cartoonists to provide and editorial balance, yet most of their readers will claim that they favor 'the other side.' Nervous advertisers and touchy readers have editors and publishers looking over their shoulders" (p. 36).

Therefore, cartoonists must conform to the pressures from editors, publishers, advertisers, and the public. Spencer (1949) posited that John Somerville of The Denver Post "sums it all up by saying the editorial cartoonist must put himself in the place of people, in his editor's shoes, and at the same time interpret the news and issues of the day in as interesting a manner as possible. Sometimes this can be a headache" (p. 11). Harrison (1981) stated, "The editor is a gatekeeper who stands between the cartoonist and the audience. The editor coordinates the work of writer and cartoonist, if those two roles are separate. The editor is likely to know and enforce the concerns of the sponsor. And the editor gauges what will find favor--or disfavor--with the public" (p. 41).

Cartoonists also feel pressure from politicians. According to Press (1981), politicians have threatened cartoonists with libel, though unsuccessfully. Outright governmental suppression is rare, but covert pressure is frequent. According to Gans (1980), public officials have several overt ways of communicating displeasure with the content of news: (1) complain to a news or corporate executive; (2) threaten the news firm economically; (3) launch investigations; (4) threaten journalists legally; and (5) appeal to the audience in an attempt to impress the audience with the failings of the journalist. Press (1981) also stated that cartoonists have reported covert pressure on their publishers from governors and senators, and "pressure may take the form of subtle bribery, as in invitations to the governor's mansion for self and wife, or other recognitions" (pp. 190-191). The political news policy of the newspaper is a gate political cartoonists must pass through; therefore, cartoons generally conform to the political environment surrounding the paper.

Consequently, the ideal role of the editorial cartoonist has changed. With the pressures cartoonists face, it is easier to conform than to attack the system. According to Press (1981), cartoonists are now seen as "buttressing the system as much as attacking it, as mildly reforming to conserve rather than champing to replace" (p. 262). In addition, Hess and Kaplan (1975) stated that the vast majority of editorial cartoonists "are merely trying to get through their working days without ruffling feathers. They illustrate the news rather than make any attempt to mold it" (p. 165).

Newspaper Endorsements of Presidential Candidates

According to Grossberg, Wartella, and Whitney (1998), the media serve "as the principle source of political information, determining how well we are informed about politics (or most other matters)" (p. 338). As Hess (1996) stated, the most politically aware segment of the population--voters--are more likely to read newspapers for political information. Newspaper readers also tend to read the editorial page for information on political issues and positions, and editorial pages then to be the location for the newspaper's candidate endorsements.

Wilhoit and Drew (1991) found that 73 percent of editorial writers said their newspapers endorsed political candidates at all levels of government, and only 15 percent said that their newspapers endorsed no candidates at any level. Grossberg, Wartella, and Whitney (1998) also stated that many newspapers, including most of the larger papers, do endorse candidates, including local, state, and presidential candidates.

In the 2000 presidential campaign, The Denver Post, for example, endorsed Vice President Al Gore for president. On the October 29, 2000, "Perspective" page, an editorial proclaimed Gore the better of the two candidates, as they "analyzed where the candidates stand on seven major issues. Based on this analysis, it is clear that Gore more closely reflects the views The Post has supported for many years. And so Gore receives The Denver Post's endorsement to be president as the United States enters a new millennium" (p. M4).

According to Barringer (2000), some papers shun candidate endorsements, but "when it comes to the presidency, editors are likely to see an endorsement as a statement of the paper's identity and a sign of its willingness to be part of the community, relying on readers to understand that editorial writers have nothing to do with the newsroom" (p. K2). Howell Raines, editorial page editor of The New York Times, said, "a candidate endorsement is not an attempt to dictate to the reader what he ought to do. It's more a reflection of our feeling that we have an obligation to be part of the civic dialogue. We have a specific obligation to our readers to let them know what our collective wisdom is" (Barringer, 2000, p. K2). Because journalists are expected to be objective and unbiased, these endorsements are usually in the editorial page section, which allows for differing views on a variety of topics.

Presentation of Research Questions

According to the gatekeeper studies discussed previously, the standardization of news is in part a result of heavy reliance on wire services and syndication as well as the socialization of journalists, who are "taught" to adhere to the values and policies of the newspaper for which they are employed. Gatekeepers decide what news to print and what news to omit as more stories than can fit in the news hole cross their desks. Gatekeepers decide what news content to print, and they also decide which cartoons to publish in their editorial pages. Furthermore, editorial cartoonists tend to rely on the news for cartoon ideas, which would seem to have a standardizing effect on political cartoons and increase the power of the gatekeepers. Therefore, the following research question will be examined:

R_1: Do editorial cartoons reflect the newspaper's news content?

Additionally, gatekeepers are pressured to print news that will not offend advertisers, big business, powerful politicians, or members of the audience because the media are profit-driven businesses and seek to maximize audience size. Many newspapers, then, set a conservative news policy in order not to offend these factions. According to the literature, political cartoonists, then, are pressured to adhere to this conservative news policy so as not to upset the status quo. Therefore, the following research question is posited:

R_2: Do editorial cartoons reflect conservative news policies?

Furthermore, many newspapers endorse political candidates. This endorsement is usually located in the editorial page section of the newspaper in order to eliminate the charge of newspaper bias or lack of objectivity as editorial pages are postulated as a place for bias and opinions to be expressed. Editorial page editors and writers are also pressured to write conservative news articles that will not offend any member of the audience by maintaining a balanced assortment of moderate opinions. A third research question will be explored:

R_3: Do the gatekeepers' choices of editorial cartoons reflect the newspaper's political candidate endorsement?

Methods

Newspaper articles and editorial cartoons pertaining to the 2000 presidential campaign that appeared in The Denver Post from September 1, 2000, to November 7, 2000 (excluding Saturday because the Saturday paper was not available to the author at the time of the study) were used in this analysis. Fully 155 news articles and 69 cartoons were found in The Post during this time frame.

To examine research questions one and two, a descriptive analysis of the cartoons and the news articles was conducted. Cartoon topics, framing of the cartoons (i.e., Were the candidates' positions on issues or their personality/character traits depicted?), and content of the cartoons were compared with the topics, frames, and content of the news articles, and a description of the results is presented.

On October 29, 2000, the editorial endorsing Vice President Al Gore was published in the Sunday "Perspective" section. In order to explore research question three, editorial cartoons were examined from October 29 to November 7. The tone (positive or negative), frame, topic, and content of each cartoon were compared with the content of this editorial.

Do Editorial Cartoons Reflect News Content?

Through a description of the editorial cartoons and the news articles that apply, this researcher found 56 out of 69 cartoons (81%) reflect news articles' topics, frames, and content.

Several of the cartoons located in The Post during the first two weeks of this analysis did not reflect the news content of the same period. One reason may be that the topics depicted in the cartoons were similar to news articles printed previous to September 1. However, part of the September 5 cartoon did reflect the content of an article in the September 4 Denver Post. The cartoon depicted Vice President Gore "picking up" the Jewish vote and Governor Bush "picking up" the Hispanic vote. Both candidates were drawn much larger than the voters are drawn. The news article in The Post explained that Christian Coalition founder Pat Robertson found statements made by Jewish vice presidential candidate Joe Lieberman refreshing as Lieberman often talked about his religious faith, but he was not pleased that Lieberman would help gain votes for Gore. The reference to Bush and the Hispanic vote was not found in articles at this time, but it was mentioned in later articles.

The September 6 Post had two cartoons, one of which showed Bush saying, "Read my lips…no new attack ads!" This cartoon was a take-off of his father's famous promise, "Read my lips…no new taxes," in the 1988 campaign. George Bush did not keep his campaign promise, and neither did George W. Bush, according to an article in the September 1 Post. This article stated that Bush ran a negative, personal attack ad against Gore after promising that he would run a high-minded campaign. The second cartoon did not relate to prior articles in the study's time frame.

The September 7 Denver Post included a cartoon portraying one of Bush's gaffes, which was reported on September 5. Bush, who thought his microphone was turned off, turned to Cheney and called a New York Times reporter an "asshole." This topic was also portrayed in a cartoon in the September 10 Post as members of the press are depicted saying, "Mr. President, Mr. President," with their arms outstretched. Bush, standing at a podium, said, "Go ahead, *@#!," and in a September 11 cartoon, Bush, again standing at a podium, said, "We are going to elevate the moral tone and dignity of discourse in Washington, and you can tell that ------ Gore I said so!"

Another editorial cartoon depicting the presidential campaign was found in the September 13 Post and contained two panels. The first pictured children standing under a "drug-free zone" sign. The second panel included seniors with Gore and Bush pins standing under a "free-drug zone" sign. This cartoon topic was also the topic of two articles in the September 6 Post, which stated that Bush unveiled his Medicare-reform plan after pressure from Gore, who accused Bush of avoiding specifics. The two plans were compared, and both included pharmaceutical benefits for the elderly. This topic was also reflected in a September 25 cartoon.

The September 15 editorial cartoon depicted people waiting in line to buy a ticket to a movie. Each person in line appeared to by hypnotized, and one person said, "Me, too! Suddenly the presidential campaign seemed silly and I needed a Coke, popcorn, and a movie." The caption read, "Subliminal Messages." An article titled, "Subliminal Ads a Myth--and Don't Work Anyway," appeared in the September 14 Post. It explained the subliminal message myth that concession sales vaulted when the words "Drink Coca-Cola" and "Eat Popcorn" were flashed on the movie screen. In a Bush campaign ad, the word RAT flashed on the screen, and because the use of subliminal messages is a controversial issue, the ad was pulled immediately after the message was discovered (even though the Bush campaign denied that the ad contained a subliminal message). Similar cartoon topics were found in The Post October 3 and 4.

A September 19 cartoon depicted Bush with training wheels on his tongue. A man standing next to him stated that the wheels would be taken off for the debates. This may relate to Bush's debate proposal, which was sharply criticized by Republicans as stated in a September 15 article. It may also be related to the reported gaffes, such as calling the Times reporter an "asshole" and Bush's pronunciation of subliminal as "subliminable."

The September 20 Post also included a cartoon depicting Gore's issues with Hollywood. In the cartoon, Gore rubbed his foot against the leg (labeled "soft money") of a Hollywood director while stating, "Peddling sex and violence to children. You people are disgusting." An article in the same day's news described Gore and Lieberman's $4.2 million dollar Hollywood fundraiser a week after attacking Hollywood for marketing "raunchy products" to teens. Republicans charged Gore and Lieberman with hypocrisy, which is reflected in the cartoon.

The September 24 Post had two cartoons. One depicted Gore jackhammering a barrel labeled, "Strategic Petroleum Reserve," while saying, "I invented the Internet, I've perfected the kiss, and now I've discovered oil." This cartoon appears to relate to a September 22 article titled, "Gore: Tap Oil Reserve to Cut Prices; Bush Blasts Plan as Political Ploy." This issue was also the topic of a September 27 cartoon in which Gore was portrayed as a fireman holding a hose labeled, "Politics--Strategic Oil Reserve." Gore was pictured aiming the hose toward a smoldering fire. This topic also appeared in a September 28 cartoon in which Gore told a man standing next to a gas pump labeled, "Strategic petroleum reserve--for emergency use only," to fill up the Air Force 2 plane labeled, "Gore campaign."

A second editorial cartoon in the September 24 Post depicted Gore shoveling money into the "Gore Express" train. The money was labeled, "Big Government Spending Promises." Several articles in previous editions of The Post stated that Bush continually attacked Gore as a proponent of big government, including a September 7 article stating that Bush attacked Gore's financial plan and said that Gore had made so many spending promises that a Gore administration would "devour" the surplus.

The second cartoon in the September 25 paper depicted two women drinking coffee. One woman said, "After seeing Gore and Bush on Oprah, there's no doubt who I want for president..." and the other responded, "Oprah." A September 12 news article titled, "Gore Courts 'Oprah' Viewers," and a September 20 article titled, "Bush Gets Personal with Oprah," discussed the candidates' debuts on Oprah's show, as both candidates tried to appeal to women voters as women tend to be less likely to vote along partisan lines.

An editorial cartoon in the September 26 Post included four panels of Janet Reno sitting at a desk. In the first panel, she stated, "We are sending Al Gore to prison without bail because he may or may not have participated in illegal activities." In the second panel, she said, "Despite public pressure and FBI criticism, we have no plans to prosecute Wen Ho Lee due to lack of evidence." Reno is quiet in the third panel. In the fourth panel, she stated, "...or is it the other way around?" In a September 15 article, Bush was reported as "renewing his assault" on Gore and his fundraising activities, which was a larger issue before the scope of this study, but was still an issue the Bush campaign kept alive in attack ads.

On October 1, a cartoon depicted Gore and Bush as piglets suckling a large pig labeled, "Soft money." Gore said, "You think we could agree to wean ourselves?" Bush replied, "You kidding? Look at yourself...You're a pig." This cartoon appears to closely relate to an article in the September 28 Post titled, "Gore Dares Bush to Halt 'Soft' Spots." Gore had stated that he was ready to order the Democratic National Committee not to air television and radio commercials paid for by unregulated "soft money" contributions if Bush would pledge the same. Bush said he would consider it, but he did not trust Gore and Democrats to abide by the agreement. The soft money issue was also depicted in an October 5 cartoon.

An October 2 cartoon included two men eating in a restaurant. One, reading a paper, stated, "The media is so biased for Gore that I am going to vote for Bush...at least that's what talk radio says I should do." Interestingly, a September 20 article titled, "Trailing Candidate Often Target of Media Skewering," discussed how Bush was open to media criticism because he was trailing behind Gore in the polls.

On October 4, the day after the first presidential debate, a cartoon depicted Gore and Bush as Pez dispensers dispensing candy labeled, "Sound bites." The caption read, "Prez Dispensers." On the same day, and article quoted Ted Sorensen, a former political adviser and speechwriter for Kennedy, "I am disappointed when I hear candidates respond in a canned way." He also said that increased media scrutiny has led to choreographed debates.

An October 5 cartoon portrayed Bush pole-vaulting over a low bar labeled, "Expectations." Gore, standing at a podium, thought, "Give me a break," as Bush said, "Gimme the Gold!" An October 4 article about the debates included a discussion of Bush's expectations. Bush advisers talked incessantly about Gore's debating skills, as they hoped to raise expectations for Gore while diminishing those for Bush.

The October 8 Post included three cartoons. One carton was a six-panel caricature of Gore from the debate, including his smirks, sighs, eye-rolls, and interruptions. This caricature, other than the sighs, was not mentioned in the newspaper articles from September 1 to October 8; however, it was used in many late night talk show hosts' monologues and in comedy shows such as "Saturday Night Live."

A second cartoon depicted a couple watching television. On the television screen, Cheney was labeled, "Endorsed by God," and Lieberman was labeled, "Endorsed by Yahweh." The vice presidential debates were held October 5, but no mention of religion was found in the prior articles referring to Cheney. As mentioned previously, Lieberman's religious affiliation was discussed.

The third cartoon portrayed Bush and Gore as farmers looking over eggs labeled, "Projected surpluses." Gore said, "These chickens go into new programs." Bush said, "No. Those chickens are for tax cuts. But these chickens..." Ralph Nader, dressed in a suit and tie, said, "I don't see any chickens." An October 4 article stated that Gore and Bush "clashed sharply" over projected budget surpluses, but as the cartoon depicted, they were counting their chickens before they hatched. The surplus issue was also depicted in an October 24 cartoon in which Gore and Bush were holding a little potted plant labeled, "Projected surplus." Bush's thought bubble pictured a money tree, and Gore's thought bubble pictured presents under a Christmas tree. The little plant just sighed as the candidates projected the images that they promised to the American people onto the little plant.

An October 9 cartoon depicted two men talking. One said, "Bush vs. Gore! That was a really big night on the tube!" The other said, "Making tough choices! That's what America's all about!" The first man replied, "I went with baseball playoff!" The other said, "You got it!" An October 3 article stated that a Pew poll showed that over half of those polled stated that they were only somewhat likely or not likely to watch the debates. As the cartoon implies, many probably watched the playoffs instead.

An October 10 cartoon depicted the famous crossing of the Delaware scene. Gore's head was placed on Washington's body. The caption read, "Al Gore recalls another highlight from his political history..." In an October 9 article, the reporter stated that Bush and his campaign were challenging Gore's character as they seized on his half-truths and exaggerations, such as his erroneous statement that he visited Texas with James Lee Witt in 1998 during the floods and fires; he went, but not with Witt. The cartoon certainly contained an exaggeration as well. An October 13 cartoon depicted this topic also.

A cartoon in the October 11 Post depicted the Republican elephant holding a Cheney/Bush sign and the Democrat donkey holding a Lieberman/Gore sign. The donkey said, "...At least we have something in common." News articles also conveyed the idea that the vice presidential candidates were more formidable, not resorting to name calling or personal attacks in the vice presidential debates, as stated in the October 6 article, "VP Hopefuls Keep it Civil," unlike the October 4 article about the first presidential debate titled, "First Debate Strikes Sparks."

The October 12 cartoon depicted Bush, Gore, and debate moderator Jim Lehrer sitting at a table. Gore, who was locked in a box, stated, "Unlike Gov. Bush, I promise not to further annoy the American people, Jim. And so I've decided to place myself in this lock box." The lock box reference stemmed from the first debate as Gore challenged Bush to promise to put social security in a lock box. An October 29 cartoon also depicted this image. The lock box reference was not found in the articles included in this study.

An October 15 eight-panel cartoon depicted a female pollster and a male voter. In the first panel, the man said, "I'm voting for the guy who is most like me!" The pollster asked, "And that is?" The man replied, "I really don't know the issues, so...," and the pollster asked, "...You're like Bush?" The man stated, "Well, last time you asked I was, but I lied," and the pollster said, "So you're like Gore?" The man replied, "Let's say that my decision isn't in a lock box yet," and the pollster said, "So it's Bush?" The man stated, "Well, you might say I'm a little fuzzy," and the pollster replied, "So, Gore?" In the sixth panel, both are quiet. In the seventh panel, the man smirked, and the pollster said, "Bush?" In the eighth panel, the man sighed, and the woman said, "Gore?" Each of these references evolved from the presidential debates, and all of these topics, excluding the lock box, were found in the previous articles about the debates.

A second cartoon in the October 15 Post depicted Bush and Gore standing at a podium, smiling, thinking, "So far, so good." An article in the same day's paper discussed how the presidential campaign was so tight that there was a debate over whether candidates should do something dramatic or play it safe, which appears to imply that both camps still believed they had a chance and that they were both doing well so far.

The Medicare/prescription drug promises projected by both candidates were issues in several cartoons. An October 16 cartoon depicted Gore and Bush walking toward an elderly woman while elbowing each other. Bush stated, "I'll allocate the entire budget surplus for a Medicare prescription program!" Gore countered, "I'll spend the entire budget for a Medicare prescription program." The elderly lady woman thought, "I'm going to be sick." An October 22 cartoon portrayed Gore and Bush as trick-or-treaters going to the door of a couple labeled, "Seniors." Gore stated, "He's so scary he'll yank your fingernails out with his teeth!" Bush countered, "No! He's the scary one! He'll eat your liver with a rusty fork!" Several articles, including the October 4 article about the first presidential debate, discussed the conflict over Medicare reform. Additionally, both candidates attacked each other's plans in the third debate as stated in two October 18 articles, and both candidates mishandled and exaggerated numbers in their discussions of Medicare and health care reforms. These exaggerations were also the topic of an October 18 cartoon that depicted Gore and Bush talking to each other as a man and woman watching thought, "Turkeys." An October 22 cartoon also referred to this issue as one of two men sitting on a pack bench stated, "These candidates are either the kind that twist everything to their advantage, or the other kind..." The other man stated, "What other kind?"

The October 19 Post included two cartoons. One included the caption, "Late campaign syndrome: The candidates get stuck on the message." In one panel, Gore pointed to a cat and said, "I will fight for you." In the second panel, Bush, talking to fish in an aquarium, stated, "We can work together." Both statements were mentioned in the October 18 article, "Claims Fly in Final Debate."

The second cartoon portrayed two people thinking, "Which candidate should I vote for?" In the next panel, Gore thought, "Which personality should I wear?" This character issue was mentioned in an earlier article in which a person from the Bush campaign depicted Gore as a Dr. Jekyll/Mr. Hyde character. This image was also portrayed in October 23 and November 1 cartoons.

After the final debate, several articles appeared stating that Nader followers asked Nader to drop out of the race because he would take votes away from Gore. Nader refused this suggestion. Several cartoons depicted this issue, as well as Nader's criticisms of the "duopoly" as stated in an October 5 article. For example, an October 24 cartoon depicted a pollster asking a dog, a cat, and a duck who they would vote for if they had to vote tomorrow. They told him, "Ralph," and the pollster said, "I'll mark undecided." In an October 26 cartoon, a woman holding a Bush sign and a man holding a Gore sign to his side watched Nader enter a train station on a railroad pushcart. The caption read, "Campaign 2000: The thrilling finish in a non-swing state." Additionally, two cartoons in the October 31 Post and one in the November 5 Post depicted Nader taking votes from Gore.

Two cartoons appeared in the October 25 Post. One portrayed a small Gore holding onto the hand of a large Clinton with a bra hanging out of his pocket. Clinton said, "He said, he's his own man." Gore stated, "You tell 'em Mr. Clinton sir. I was just kidding 'bout all that distancing myself from you stuff." This may be related to Gore's assertions in the first debate that he wanted to be seen as his own man when Bush attacked the moral character of the Clinton administration. However, in an October 18 article about the final debates, Gore asserted, "If you want somebody who believes we were better off eight years ago than we are now…here is your man [Bush]," aligning himself with the Clinton administration.

The second cartoon depicted Bush saying, "I support our efforts in Korea--as long as they benefit our ally…uh…," and thinking, "Oh, man! East Korea or West Korea?!" This may be related to the October 11 article that stated one concern of the Bush campaign was Bush's lack of experience in foreign affairs. It also appears to relate to the assertion in the October 11 article that the Bush campaign still had to worry about a sense among many voters, according to polls, that he is "not as swift as Gore and not as steeped in policy," which was the topic of a November 1 cartoon that portrayed a dark light bulb in Bush's thought bubble.

An October 26 cartoon depicted, "Stuff that will get tossed out sometime after Halloween," and campaign promises was listed among Halloween candy, apples, and popcorn balls. This topic was not related directly to the articles; rather, it appears that it relates to the cynicism many voters have when they hear grandiose promises. In the third debate, an audience member told the candidates that his elementary school class wanted to know if they would keep their campaign promises.

An October 27 cartoon portrayed Bush and Gore with their arms around a man who was thinking, "Should I ignore them or give them an elbow?" The caption read, "The undecided voter." Several articles stated that undecided voters would be an important factor in this election, including an October 19 article in which Kohut, the director of polling for the Pew Research Center, said that the final debate presented no turning point, "leaving the election to 'turn on those undecided voters finally being confronted with the fact that they have to make a decision.'" A November 5 and a November 7 cartoon reflected the same theme.

A cartoon in the October 29 Post portrayed Gore as a cardboard figure that asked a man if he thought he looked natural. The man replied, "You were your true self, sir." This may refer to the caricature of Gore as being "formal" and stiff as asserted in an October 12 article, "Candidates Can't Seem to Escape Caricature."

An October 30 cartoon depicted the stock market hitting Gore in the rear end. Similarly, a September 29 article stated, "In recent weeks, oil prices have risen sharply, corporate earnings have slumped, and stocks have tumbled, giving the Republican nominee a new opening to make the case for his tax-cut plan."

A November 3 cartoon portrayed a pumpkin in four panels, and the captions read, "Why do Halloween pumpkins remind us of campaign 2000? Because they're hollow…with carved, witless faces. Just like the TV focus groups." No articles included in this study appeared to discuss TV focus groups.

A cartoon from November 5 depicted Gore and Bush on either side of a pair of legs labeled, "Swing states." Both candidates were trying to nail the feet down. This was a popular topic in many of the articles, such as the November 3 article that stated that the candidates continued to focus on large, closely contested states, and a November 5 article that stated that no fewer than 12 states were classified as tossups as the campaign entered its "final, frantic 72 hours."

A November 7 cartoon portrayed a man sitting in a chair. In the first panel, he stated, "Bush is stupid." In the second panel, he stated, "Gore is stupid." In the third panel, he said, "I'm not going to vote," and in the fourth panel, he said, "I'm stupid." Interestingly, a November 6 article titled, "Votes Find Race Tense, But Boring," discussed voter apathy in this election.

Another November 7 cartoon depicted a man with a long beard writing, by candlelight, in a large book, "One thing remains clear as the presidential campaign winds down to its last historical moments: Oratory is dead." Similarly, and article in the October 24 Post stated, "Think of the debates not as final exams but as very high-stakes, naked television commercials." Rather than substance, the debates, the speeches, and the media coverage focused on style and character attacks.

Based on the cartoon descriptions, it appears that many of the editorial cartoons found in The Denver Post do reflect the content of articles found in The Post. Several of the cartoons also appeared to reflect the charges and attacks made by the candidates and reported in the news articles and in other media. Much of the news found in The Post (81% or 125 out of 155) came from wire services or larger newspapers, and 71% (49 out of 69) cartoons were from syndicated cartoonists, seemingly a reflection of and a perpetuation of standardization of the news.

Of the 13 cartoons not described as relating to the news content of the articles found in The Post, several referred to topics, predominantly character issues, that were popular in broadcast media, such as late night talk shows, and in the debates. Additionally, just over half of the cartoons not related to the news articles were found in the first two weeks of the study's time frame (September 1-14). It is possible that the topics of these cartoons were discussed in articles prior to September 1.

However, because many cartoonists reflect on the news for cartoon topics, it appears that gatekeepers are allotted considerable power as they decide what is news and what is not. What is included in the news becomes material for cartoonists, and the majority of the public does not have the resources necessary (e.g., time, money) to discover what is not included. Additionally, many of the cartoons repeated the same themes; this also appears to contribute to standardization.

Do Editorial Cartoons Reflect Conservative News Policies?

Based on the descriptions of the editorial cartoons, it also appears that the cartoons reflect conservative news policies. The editorial page editor of The Denver Post stated in an interview with the author, "The Post's own editorial positions are militarily moderate--we're comfortable with both the new Democrats and moderate Republicans." She also stated, "...our effort is to give fair representation to the entire political spectrum." However, 35 cartoons (50%) depicted both Gore and Bush, 18 cartoons (26%) included just Gore, 10 cartoons (15%) included just Bush, 1 cartoon

(1%) included Buchanan, 2 cartoons (3%) portrayed just Nader (several other cartoons included Nader along with Gore and Bush, and they were counted as "both Gore and Bush"), and 3 cartoons (5%) depicted the vice presidential candidates. No cartoon included Socialist, Natural Law, Communist, or Libertarian views or candidates. This seems to perpetuate the status quo (i.e., perpetuating the two-party system), as conservative news policies are generally in place in order not to "offend" newspaper readers, big business, or powerful politicians.

The majority of the cartoons did not appear to directly attack or harshly rebuke the major party candidate's positions on issues or the candidates themselves; rather, humor was used to "poke fun" at the candidates (one of the exceptions may be the cartoon depicting Bush's "light bulb" as nonfunctional). This result is in line with Harrison's (1981) observation that cartoons have traditionally angered political figures because they were able to crystallize complex issues. Rather than anger these powerful political figures or explain complex issues, 77% of the cartoons appeared to depict the candidate character and caricatures (e.g., Bush as a "bumbler;" Gore as "stoic"). Broadcast media also appeared to perpetuate these images. According to an October 11 article, Gore's campaign advisors had him watch a parody of himself on "Saturday Night Live" after then first debate in order to help him change his image for the second debates.

Do the Gatekeepers' Choices of Editorial Cartoons Reflect Candidate Endorsements?

According to The Post's endorsement of Gore, the October 29 editorial stated, "The election, then, should be decided on the issues. And in the issues, Gore has made the better case" (p. M5). The editorial stated that Bush had a better Social Security plan than Gore; however, Gore's proposals for tax cuts, education, welfare reform, and environmental issues were superior to Bush's proposals. None of these issues were portrayed in the cartoons included in this exploration (other than Gore's lock box analogy).

However, the editorial stated that foreign policy, healthcare, and character issues were strengths and weaknesses for both candidates. These issues were included in the editorial cartoons (as well as the projected surplus and the Strategic Petroleum Reserve). One may speculate that this may be more than a coincidence.

As previously stated, 18 cartoons just depicted Gore as opposed to 10 cartoons only portraying Bush. If The Post's endorsement directly affected the content of cartoons or choice of cartoons, one may assume that cartoons portraying only Gore may be eliminated after the endorsement. This was not the case; three cartoons appeared after the endorsement that portrayed just Gore (including one the same day as the endorsement) as opposed to two depicting just Bush. Additionally, as suggested in the research, the Post's cartoonist would "feel" pressure to conform to the paper's political standing. However, when the Post's cartoonist's cartoons were compared, five cartoons reflected negative portrayals of Bush and four cartoons reflected negative portrayals of Gore. The majority of his cartoons "poked fun" at both candidates. Therefore, it appears that the gatekeepers' choice of editorial cartoons does not reflect the newspaper's political candidate endorsement, although several of the topics mentioned in the editorial were cartoon topics.

Conclusion

Gatekeeper studies state that gatekeepers choose news based on the generally conservative news policies set by owners in order not to offend advertisers, powerful politicians, or the audience, and this case study supports this reasoning. The proliferation of standardization, such as using syndicated news articles and political cartoons, perpetuates this conservatism, as larger papers, generally owned by large corporations, take care to balance the news by avoiding topics that would offend those who pay their salaries. News media take care not to offend politicians, who can also exert covert and overt pressures for conformity (such as perpetuating the democratic, capitalist ideology).

This case study of The Denver Post attempted to explore the standardization of political cartoons by examining how cartoons reflect news content, conservative policies, and endorsements. It appears that the majority of cartoons do reflect news content, topics and frames, especially those cartoons that reflect the candidate's attacks as reported in the news articles. The majority of cartoons also reflect moderate, conservative policies as the majority of cartoons included both major party candidates, perpetuating the two-party system, and "poked fun" at the candidates' characters and caricatures more often than their positions on issues. The endorsement did not appear to directly affect the cartoon content, although it appeared that the issues The Post editorial stated were strengths and weaknesses for both major party candidates were the topics that appeared most often in the cartoons that dealt with issues.

This pilot exploration of cartoons has several limitations. First, the time frame for this study was limiting. Several cartoons did not appear to relate to the news content, and this may be because the topics may have appeared before the scope of the study. Further research could include a longitudinal study that includes the primaries. Editorial cartoons may be quite different at that time as some media/political research states that media coverage of the primaries affects who wins the primaries. Perhaps political editorial cartoons play a role in this dynamic. Second, as a case study, this exploration cannot be generalized to all political cartoons or all newspapers. A cross-study of several newspapers may produce more definitive results. Another potential research project could include a comparison of newspapers that overtly supported either Bush or Gore, and could also compare these newspapers those that did not overtly support either major party candidate. Third, this study was primarily descriptive in nature; however, this exploration does raise several potential research hypotheses that could be examined using quantitative content analysis techniques.

Gatekeepers have an important job to do: They choose the news that the public "needs" to know in order to become informed citizens. However, when news is chosen based on conservative news policies set not to offend powerful politicians and advertisers, the public may not be as informed as they should be. In the days of Franklin, newspapers were more apt to provide "a marketplace of ideas" in the libertarian tradition, and political cartoons tended to be more critical of the powerful. In the 21st century, mainstream newspaper editorial cartoons have strayed from biting criticism to using their freedom, as Press (1981) stated, "for pricks and stings and occasionally just to amuse or approve, and they hope that, in the process, they have occasionally hit bulls-eye" (p. 207).

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CAMPAIGN CONTRIBUTIONS:

Online Newspapers Go Beyond Shovelware in Covering Election 2000

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ABSTRACT

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Online Newspapers Go Beyond Shovelware in Covering Election 2000

As newspapers move online, they encounter opportunities to contribute to campaign coverage, a staple of American journalism, in new ways. This study, based on a survey of online editors at sites affiliated with leading U.S. papers, indicates that editors gave primary emphasis to the medium's ability to provide Election 2000 information faster and in more detail. Though options for enhancing political discourse were appreciated by some, both interactivity and multimedia presentations were less widely cited among editors' key goals and perceived successes.

CAMPAIGN CONTRIBUTIONS:
Online Newspapers Go Beyond Shovelware in Covering Election 2000

Coverage of political campaigns, elections and outcomes has always been a staple of American newspaper journalism. That one of the key jobs of the press is to help produce a more informed electorate is an underlying, generally unquestioned assumption in journalistic circles (Gans, 1998). Indeed, the media claim special rights and privileges, from blanket First Amendment protection to special postal rates, based on their unique status as the "fourth branch" of government (Schudson, 1995). Surveys of journalists' self-perceptions repeatedly unearth themes of public service and a commitment to making democracy work, typically through a combination of disseminating and interpreting what is seen as important information (Weaver and Wilhoit, 1996). Whether journalists actually do what they see themselves as doing (and whether what they do actually enhances the democratic process) always has been open to considerable question. Nonetheless, the belief that their role is exemplified by their handling of political information has remained unshakeable, and political coverage is a component of the newspaper product to which journalists have ascribed primary importance (see, for example, its emphasis by gatekeepers, as described in White [1950] and Bleske [1991], among others).

Today's newspaper comes in two flavors: the traditional print product and an online counterpart. With more than 3,100 U.S. newspapers now offering Web sites, including 1,266 dailies ("Online media directory," 2001), papers can fairly be said to have set up shop online. The Web opens journalists' self-perception as a cornerstone of democracy to fresh interpretation. On the one hand, citizens no longer need their newspaper -- or any other traditional media outlet -- to inform themselves about candidates and campaign issues. In 2000, more than 5,000 Web sites about U.S. politics were available, according to politicalinformation.com, a specialty search engine devoted to helping users find the ones they wanted. On the other hand, the Web offers print journalists an opportunity to enhance their role, both by extending their coverage of government -- something they describe as a key benefit of online resources (Garrison, 2000) -- and by venturing into whole new areas such as audio/video content or interactive political forums. Early reports indicate that citizens continue to rely on traditional media for their political surveillance needs -- even when they go online. Asked what Web sites they visited most often for news about the 2000 election, most Internet users said they went to the sites of major media organizations such as CNN or *The New York Times* ("Internet election," 2000). [1]

The Web offers both citizens and journalists many new choices related to information, discourse and decision-making. Which options are they pursuing? Using journalists' construction of their own news-work activities as a framework, this exploratory study examines what online editors at leading newspapers around the country contributed to coverage of the 2000 campaign and election. In particular, it seeks to investigate the following research questions:

* What do online editors see as their roles and goals in covering contemporary political campaigns and elections through newspaper-affiliated Web sites?

* What types of content do they identify as most deserving of pride in relation to those goals?

* What lessons from their experience in 2000 might they apply to future online political coverage?

LITERATURE REVIEW: ONLINE POLITICAL NEWS AND ITS PROVIDERS

In the United States, use of the Web as a source of news in general and political news in particular continues to soar. Although precise numbers vary, one online ratings service estimates 167 million Americans now have Internet access from home and/or work, putting online penetration at about 60 percent ("Internet penetration," 2001). Americans also are spending more time online -- an estimated 97 billion total minutes in February 2001, up 51 percent from a year earlier ("Jupiter Media Metrix," 2001). In recent years, the Internet has been steadily gaining regular users -- the only news medium other than radio to do so in the late 1990s. Among younger audiences, almost 45 percent now use the 'Net regularly, a greater percentage than regularly read any form of print media and rapidly approaching the numbers who regularly watch TV news (Stempel, Hargrove and Bernt, 2000). They apparently are coming to trust the online medium as a news source, as well. A study by Flanigan and Metzger (2000a) indicated that while audience members rate newspapers as the most credible of media, they do not see the Internet as significantly less credible than other media forms, including magazines, radio and television.

When it comes to online political news, there is conflicting evidence. A 1998 study of college students (Tewksbury and Althaus, 2000) indicated their attention to and recall of political articles in the Web version of *The New York Times* were less than in the print version. But by the 2000 election, the Internet seems to have become more firmly entrenched as a source of political news among the population as a whole. A Pew Research Center study found that nearly one in five Americans went online for election news last year, up from 4 percent who did so in 1996.

Among those already online, fully one-third got election news from the 'Net, most of them citing convenience as the main attraction. Moreover, they relied on the information they found online; 43 percent of online political news users said it affected their voting decisions. And as mentioned above, their most common sources for political information were the Web sites of major news outlets, including leading national newspapers such as the *Times* ("Internet election," 2000).

Contrary to theoretical predictions of relative constancy and functional equivalence of the media, which suggest that older media forms will be displaced by ones that more cheaply or conveniently meet users' needs (McCombs, 1972), mounting evidence seems to indicate that people who use the Internet for news also are likely to be newspaper readers. Stempel et al. (2000) found that Internet users were more likely than non-users to regularly read a newspaper and listen to radio news. Another study that specifically explored whether use of online media was displacing use of older formats also found that the Web supplements rather than replaces traditional news media. While the Web may compete with the entertainment functions of television, its use as a source of news seems to be positively related to reading print newspapers (Althaus and Tewskbury, 2000). A small-scale study in Austin, TX, similarly found a large overlap between readers of print and online papers, particularly local ones (Chyi and Lasorsa, 1999). More anecdotal evidence can be found in the trade press. In general, it supports the view that, as one observer put it, new media can "preserve and extend the best aspects of the print culture while augmenting it with their various technological advantages" (Boynton, 2000).

He may have hit on the key practical implications of these usage findings for those in online newsrooms affiliated with print newspapers. People will come to the newspaper's site -- but many will already be familiar with what's in the print paper, and they will expect to find more online than mere shovelware (stories "shoveled" onto the Web directly from the paper). Not only do people use the Internet specifically to get information (Flanigan and Metzger, 2000b), but they seem far more likely to go online to learn more about stories first seen in traditional media than to use the Web as a substitute for those media ("Internet news audience," 1999). Online, then, they seem apt to be looking for additional or supplemental content such as breaking news, background stories, multimedia components, searchable databases or opportunities to talk about a news story or event (South, 1999). In short, they may want what one online news expert calls "more functional, imaginative news," sites that distinguish themselves by a wealth of detail and, increasingly, interactive components (Schafer, 2001).

If so, the new medium could be a good fit for journalists, whose self-perception as people who perform a public service through "the transmission and interpretation of information" (Johnstone, Slawski and Bowman, 1976, p. 109) seems well-entrenched across time (see also Weaver and Wilhoit, 1986, 1996) and even across cultures (see, for example, Henningham [1993], and Wu, Weaver and Johnson [1996]). Longitudinal studies by both Garrison (2000) and Middleberg and Ross ("Journalists find," 2000) indicate that traditional journalists are increasingly seeking and using online resources to enhance the information they convey to the public. Preliminary work into the sociology of online news work indicates the self-perception extends seamlessly into the new medium. For example, Brill (1997) found that people working in online newsrooms rate the ability to make news judgments as among their most important skills, and Singer (1997) found that print journalists considering the effects of online delivery on their roles saw the provision and interpretation of high-quality information as crucial.

Indeed, the Web perhaps can serve as a way to counter the criticisms of traditional media coverage of campaigns and elections: that it is superficial and overly focused on sensationalistic and "horse-race" aspects of politics. The key attributes of the medium itself make it suitable for addressing these concerns. To borrow from a list put together by Millison (1999), the Web allows online journalism to be:

* "Real-time" or immediate, an ideal medium for breaking news.[2]

* "Shifted time," which Millison suggests accommodates archives but also can be seen more broadly. The Internet is a medium whose lack of time or space constraints allows unlimited background and reference materials to be made available, accessible at users' convenience.

* Multimedia, meaning it can include not just text and graphics but (at the current level of technological capability and general accessibility) audio and video content.

* Interactive in a variety of ways that all give the user greater control over information content and flow, through mechanisms ranging from e-mail to discussion forums to personalizable info-retrieval tools.

A quick word about that last attribute before moving on to the present study. The interactive nature of the online medium has been a source of considerable excitement among political communication theorists. Some envision the Web as a tool for creating or recreating the much-discussed but perpetually elusive "public sphere" seen by John Dewey, Jurgen Habermas and others as vital to the proper functioning of true democracy. The potential rise of an "electronic republic" (Grossman, 1995) forces the predominantly one-way flow of traditional mass media such as newspapers to give way to a two-way flow that enables audience members to actively participate in the communication process. It thus has the potential to drastically alter the relative importance of traditional media in the formation of political sensibilities. "At the very least," says one political researcher, "the Net appears likely to decrease the influence of established media organizations over formation of the political agenda" (Bimber, 1998).

In reality, that hasn't happened yet. The Pew study cited above, for instance, showed that while online users enjoyed quick unscientific polls, participating in political chat groups held far less interest ("Internet election," 2000). Studies based on the 1996 and 1998 elections have shown that for their part, political candidates not only fail to encourage interaction with potential voters (Davis, 1999), they tend to actively avoid it, fearing a loss of control over their message and a loss of ability to fudge about their specific proposals (Stromer-Galley, 2000). They are much more apt to use the medium as a tool for enhanced self-promotion than enhanced accountability (Owen, Davis and Strickler, 1999). And while a few larger media sites, such as the *Washington Post*, have (after some experimentation) actively promoted online chats and discussion areas (Stencel, 2000), most papers were holding back well into the late 1990s (Schultz, 1999; Tankard and Ban, 1998). Nonetheless, Weaver and Wilhoit's latest study (1996) revealed a growing sense among journalists that their roles do include providing a way for people to express their views. One of the goals of this study was to examine how online editors perceived such interactive political forums and what use they were making of them.

METHODOLOGY

This study uses a descriptive survey, one that attempts to document and describe current conditions (Wimmer and Dominick, 1991). The researcher chose a purposive sampling method, appropriate in studies such as this in which cases that would be especially informative were sought (Neuman, 1991). The goal here was to gather input from online editors at sites tied to major newspapers in each of the 50 states. The rationale was that these would be the papers most likely to have brand name recognition for every voter in the relevant state and therefore could be expected to be probable sources of state and national political content if users turned to an online newspaper for such content at all.

The Web site of the Audit Bureau of Circulations (www.accessabc.com) was used to determine which papers to include in the survey; this site was chosen because it provides the original data used to ascertain newspaper circulation and was judged to be an authoritative source. Based on these ABC figures, the researcher selected the biggest paper in each state for inclusion. In addition, all papers with a daily circulation over 250,000 -- the largest category used by the Newspaper Association of America -- were included; such major "metros" typically carry name recognition throughout their states and often circulate statewide. For some states, only the state's largest paper qualified for inclusion. For other states, multiple newspapers qualified because they all had a circulation over 250,000; California, for example, has six giant papers.

Altogether, 80 newspapers were chosen for inclusion in this study, ranging in circulation size from 33,000 (small, but the largest in its sparsely populated state) to well over 1 million.

Once the newspapers were identified, each paper's Web site was accessed to determine the name and contact information of an appropriate editorial staffer, someone with responsibility for the site's political content. This proved easier said than done. While a majority of newspaper Web sites do provide staff lists (which can be located with varying degrees of difficulty), many do not -- and those that do are inconsistent in how staffers are identified and how much contact info is provided. Some offer no staff names, urging users to give feedback simply to "the newsroom." Some offer alphabetical staff directories, but do not identify who does what. Others offer names and job titles, but no way to contact them. Nevertheless, a list of contacts and their e-mail addresses eventually was compiled, with specific names whenever possible and generic e-mail addresses (such as "webstaff@nameofpaper.com") when not.

Given that the targeted respondents were editors of online products, an e-mail survey seemed an appropriate vehicle. The week before the Nov. 7 election, the researcher sent an introductory e-mail letter to editors at each of the 80 newspapers, explaining the purpose of her study, promising confidentiality to all respondents, and offering to share her findings with those kind enough to participate. After the first layer of election dust had settled, the survey was sent electronically to the same editors, with the first "mailing" going out on Nov. 9 and 10, 2000.

The survey consisted of 10 questions, some with multiple parts. Most of the questions concerned coverage of the overall campaign, with a few questions specifically related to Election Night (which subsequently dragged on into Election Month-and-a-Half). Question construction was informed by results of the researcher's earlier studies related to online newspapers' coverage of the 2000 Iowa caucus, which served as a small-scale pre-test for the present study.

Both closed-ended and open-ended questions were used. The closed-ended questions sought quantifiable data relating to such issues as the presence or absence of political discussion forums or the amount of staff resources available for political coverage. The open-ended ones sought more interpretive feedback from editors related primarily to their goals for the political segments of their sites, the content areas they were most proud of, and the lessons they will take away in planning for future campaign coverage. This combination of question types offers the ability to probe meaning (Converse and Presser, 1986), important in an exploratory study such as this one which seeks to understand not just what was included on these Web sites but why.

Although it took as many as five e-mailings over the course of four months and, in some cases, multiple follow-up phone calls to shake responses loose, a total of 57 online editors eventually completed the survey, for a response rate of just over 71 percent. This rate compares favorably with the mean response rate for e-mail surveys, which seems to be hovering just above 30 percent (Sheehan, 2001). Responses were received from papers in 41 of the 50 states (82 percent), both very small and very large.

A coding sheet was developed for the closed-ended questions, and responses were entered into SPSS for analysis. Because the quantitative data were nominal (or, on questions related to staff size, ordinal) in nature, descriptive statistics -- primarily frequency analysis -- were the most relevant here.

With the open-ended questions, the goal of the data analysis was to identify major themes in editors' conceptualizations of their content decisions and journalistic roles in an online environment. To help with this textual assessment, a short summary of the editor's comments in response to each open-ended question also was entered into SPSS. This process was not intended to be a substitute for detailed analysis of the qualitative data; rather, it allowed for quick identification of major concepts, based on the key attributes of online media described above. The summaries were then used as a guide for categorizing responses and as a reference back to the actual text, which fleshed out nuances in those responses, as reported here.

FINDINGS

The number of major newspapers offering sections of their online sites dedicated specifically to election coverage increased dramatically from 1996 to 2000. Thirteen of the papers included in this study (22.8 percent) did not even have a Web site in 1996, according to their current editors. Of the 44 that were online in 1996, 27 offered an election section that year, their editors said; another four editors said they did not know whether an election section was available or not. In 2000, not only were all the newspapers included in this study online (offering either stand-alone sites or community/portal sites typically produced in conjunction with other information providers), but 53 of the 57 (93 percent) devoted a separate section of their site to election coverage. In other words, approximately twice as many leading newspapers offered separate online election sections in 2000 as did so in 1996.

This study found that goals related to informing the public dominated what editors of those online election sections wanted to accomplish in 2000, as well as what they were most proud of having accomplished after the campaign was over. The findings indicate that while the goal itself is a traditional one for journalists, they are finding ways to take advantage of the Web's unique attributes in meeting it. This section also looks at how online editors handled Election Night, concluding with a summary of what they would like to do differently in 2004.

ELECTION 2000: What online editors wanted to accomplish (RQ1)

Editors asked to describe their primary goal for their online coverage of the 2000 election offered varied and commonly multi-faceted responses. However, their ideas fall into rough clusters. Two types of closely related, information-oriented goals -- providing information and bolstering the newspaper's and/or Web site's reputation, primarily through that information service -- were mentioned by a sizable majority of the editors. A different sort of goal -- creating or strengthening the democratic community, notably by stimulating public discussion of political issues -- was much less frequently cited.

When Weaver and Wilhoit (1996) asked journalists in the early 1990s what they saw as their most important role, the most popular response (offered by 69 percent) was to get information to the public quickly. The Web is an ideal medium for journalists who hold to that perception -- and, at least among respondents here, many apparently do. A goal directly related to informing users was mentioned by 45 of the 49 editors (91.8 percent) who offered at least one goal. Of those, 19 referred specifically to the Web's ability to provide timely news, especially on Election Night. In fact, Election Night loomed large in editors' minds as, in retrospect, they considered overall goals for their campaign coverage. Typical responses included "to present results of major races fast" and "to provide to our viewers complete election returns throughout the evening, updated within minutes of changes in voter returns." Some editors did differentiate between pre- and post-election goals, such as the one who sought "to provide more extensive information before the elections and to provide real-time data the night of the elections."

In addition to its timeliness, another attribute of the Web is its unlimited news hole, creating the possibility of offering information in significant depth and detail. The editor who referred to the site's goal as to "keep people abreast of over 400 local elections" recognized this, as did the one who emphasized provision of a "comprehensive collection of resources."

A handful of editors with information-oriented goals defined those goals specifically in terms of the value of information for voters facing a ballot decision. The goal was to "give voters the ability to understand the choice they were about to make," said one; "provide news useful to readers wanting to make a decision," explained another.

Notably, these editors saw the Web site as extending the franchise of the print newspaper rather than standing apart from it. Those who cited the ability to provide immediate results were implicitly doing so. Others were explicit. Our goal was to "provide an online resource that combined the best elements of the newspaper coverage with supplementary material online to broaden the information available to readers," one editor said. Another wanted to be a "central archive" of newspaper political coverage, supplemented with material not available in print. Some saw the Web site as finally enabling them to beat television, something they could never do in print. "We were trying to beat the TV stations at their game, and we succeeded with better live coverage. We also scooped them on the biggest local race," said one proud online editor.

In performing these public service roles by complementing the print product, these editors saw themselves as fulfilling another function, as well: making the Web site itself successful. One editor started by saying his goal was "helping citizens make better choices," then added, "and by making material available all the time (instead of just one day like the print election guide), to drive online viewership." Another wanted to "extend the newspaper's role in the democratic process beyond the static capabilities of print. While doing so, build traffic." A third simply listed two goals: "To keep visitors to (us) informed. To draw traffic." Some reversed the priorities, such as the editor who wanted to "generate traffic, grow brand identify and provide a public service by providing detailed and useful information."

Only four editors offered goals not directly related to providing information or building a viable online business, but rather to stimulating political discourse among a community of online users. One sought to "create a local community for discussion of a national issue." Another sought to "empower our community to interact more directly with candidates and officials and to provide the foundation for an electronic town hall." Two others emphasized the desire to engage readers in what one called "lively discussions" about the election.

ELECTION 2000: What online editors believed they accomplished (RQ2)

Whatever their goals, the editors were nearly unanimous in declaring that they had been met. Of the 48 respondents answering this question, only one said he failed to meet his goals, citing the "overwhelming number of races" and expressing regret that it was not easier for readers to sort through the site to find important information. Forty-three gave an unequivocal "yes" to the question of whether they had met their goals for the site. Four admitted they met some goals but not others, such as the editor cited above who did build an archive of newspaper articles but was prevented by "time constraints and technical problems" from offering as much original online material as he had hoped.

As evidence of their success, many cited heavy traffic, especially but not exclusively on Election Night; in other words, they evaluated their goals in terms of users' actions. The overwhelming majority of these editors reported that usage of their election site as a whole either exceeded (18 editors, 31.6 percent) or met (31 editors, 54.4 percent) their expectations, even given the amount of work that the section required. "Online traffic soared, so someone must have found it valuable," one editor explained. "Traffic to our Web site went up 30 percent, but traffic to our forums and surveys tripled," another editor said. A third cited "strong readership," especially of information related to his state's ballot propositions, "where we had the kind of in-depth coverage that voters wanted to sort out how they'd vote."

For many, though, the focus was again on Election Night, rather than on coverage during the course of the campaign. On Election Night, 43 of the editors (75.4 percent) reported seeing a usage spike; only one said he did not. (Another eight said they did not yet know whether usage had jumped, and three said the information was confidential; two did not answer the question.) In particular, they expressed satisfaction over the speed with which they were able to update the results. "We were posting results as fast as the TV and CNN," declared one editor in judging the election section a success. "Readers could find out the results of local races seven to eight hours earlier than if they had waited for the newspaper to arrive on their doorstep," said another.

Others attributed their success to having made good choices up front. One editor said he met his goal of giving users a "clear understanding of the issues and candidates" because he and his staff kept it in sight "during the planning and execution stages, and we kept content at the forefront rather than worrying about gimmicks." Of course, this particular election stretched journalists' resiliency in a variety of ways. While several editors yearned for more staff to do even better, at least one weary editor in a battleground state took pride in "taxing our own resources beyond their maximums, and not once did we leave (sic) down our guard. Our staff was proud of its work, and it showed."

What, specifically, did these newspaper Web sites offer that generated the pride this editor and others expressed in their 2000 election sections? Respondents were asked whether their election sites contained content unique to the Web and, if so, to briefly describe as many as three online-only content areas they were most proud of.

Forty-five editors (78.9 percent) said they provided at least some unique election content. (Another three who said they did not provide such content answered subsequent questions in a way that indicated that in fact, they did.) Admittedly, most of the content on their sites came from print; 38 (66.7 percent) said at least three-quarters of their online election content also ran in the newspaper, while only four (7 percent) said more than half their online content was original. (One other editor said a majority of the political sections contained "substantial" Web-only content.) Their descriptions of unique aspects that were special to them reveal what these editors are learning about what the Web can do that the newspaper cannot. **Table 1** provides an overview of editors' responses to this question.

Among the 44 editors who described at least one online-only content area that they were most proud of, the Web's two key information-related attributes -- the ability to offer depth and detail, and the ability to provide continuous updates -- were both highly appreciated. A total of 95 content areas were cited by editors, of which 38 (40 percent) were features that provided information too extensive to offer in print (or, if offered, too expensive to publish and distribute more than once). These included ballot guides; detailed candidate profiles, bios and/or questionnaire responses; and other "news you can use" features such as precinct finders, archived poll results or a section that "tracked campaign contributions to presidential candidates right down to the local town level." In general, editors who cited online features in this general category saw their site as providing what one described as a "one-stop shopping section for voters by pulling in analysis and detailed reporting from as many different sources as possible."

Twenty-nine of the 95 content areas (30.5 percent) cited by editors in response to this question were ones that took advantage of the Web's ability to provide breaking news, obviously a particularly important attribute on Election Night itself. Editors who were proud of their Election Night updates tended to be very proud, placing the updates at the top of their list. Sixteen of 44 editors (36.4 percent) who offered at least one content area they were most proud of listed the provision of results first. Nine of 31 (29 percent) who offered at least two content areas listed it second, and only four of 16 (25 percent) who offered three content areas listed it third. The key components seemed to be the ability both to compete with television and to enhance the service provided by the affiliated newspaper. "We wrote Web-only stories throughout the evening to keep up with the horse race so we would be totally competitive with television and not have to wait for the (newspaper's) next deadline," said one editor. Another said the Web team built an application allowing print reporters to enter local race tallies into a database; those numbers were "output immediately for the Web site and later in Quark format for the print edition." A few sites went well beyond simply providing updated returns. Among the most extensive online efforts were those reported by this editor: "We covered Election Night live via Web radio and a chat room, had cell phone reporters at all the major headquarters, a pol science professor as an analyst, and interviewed candidates, campaign managers, and leading political figures as the news broke. We did better than the networks by immediately questioning the Florida result as soon as it was announced."

Although only a few editors described facilitating discussion as their primary goal, as described above, chats and discussion forums were cited 14 times (14.7 percent of the total 95 responses) by editors as they considered content areas they were most proud of (in addition to the editor cited in the previous paragraph who mentioned both "chats" and "Web radio" in connection with his site's Election Night updates). Eight editors listed these interactive components as their first picks. Again, the key advantage seemed to be offering something that could not be offered in print. Chats with candidates "added a previously non-existent dimension to the voter-candidate relationship," said one editor. Others appreciated being able to provide an opportunity for fresh voices to be heard, such as the editor who said "some of the best content" came from readers talking about political news in her site's forums. Although several described these forums as lively and active, one editor offered evidence that they had made a concrete contribution to democracy: "Discourse on our education issues forum, for example, has been cited during legislative debate on school reform measures." More information about these sites' discussion areas is provided below.

A somewhat different aspect of interactivity involves users' ability to personalize information, something that is possible but more cumbersome in print. An example offered by editors here is a "candidate match" feature, cited by four editors as their top pick and not cited at all by any others (perhaps because they did not offer it). One editor who mentioned that feature described it as "an interactive candidate-picking tool. Users selected issues important to them, then selected positions on those issues that most closely matched their own. Our database added up the results and told them which candidate most closely matched them."

One other category of content received honorable mention from these editors: multimedia material, primarily audio and/or video of the candidates. Ten of the 95 content areas mentioned (10.5 percent) involved solely this type of content, which is obviously not possible in print. While this is only slightly fewer mentions than the discussion forums got, the pattern was reversed: Only one editor listed multimedia content as a top source of pride, while seven editors cited it second and two listed it third. Again, multimedia content was seen primarily as supplementing print coverage. For example, one editor described video interviews of the candidates as a way for voters to "assess their credibility and sincerity"; another cited video of local candidates' reactions to how they fared, "paired with the newspaper's stories online."

These editors, then, zeroed in on four core attributes of the Web as a news medium in describing how they used it in covering this major event: its ability to offer timeliness, depth, interactivity (including personalizable content) and multimedia formats. Timeliness related primarily to Election Night itself, which will be discussed further in the next section. First, however, it may be valuable to say a bit more about interactivity, given its central role in scholarly considerations of the value or potential of the Internet as tool for political discourse and, through it, citizen empowerment.

The survey included a short set of questions related to political discussion areas. Overall, 38 of the 57 editors who responded (66.7 percent) said their sites contained or linked directly to opportunities for users to engage in political discourse. Of those, the great majority allowed freewheeling conversation; only three editors (7.9 percent of those offering forums) said user messages were screened before they were posted. But this does not mean editors took a "hands-off" approach to their boards; on the contrary, 23 editors (60.5 percent of those offering forums) said they took action to stimulate discussion. Their actions ran from simply linking from relevant stories or promoting discussion boards in the print paper to seeding the boards with provocative questions. "After doing this for nearly six years, we've become pretty good at crafting questions to stimulate discussion threads," one editor said. "The most polarizing issues actually tend not to stimulate the best discussions." Several editors said they used moderators (including at least one college professor) effectively. "Generally, the users of our political forums don't need much stimulation," another editor said. "However, we provide regular expert moderators who float an `issue of the day' and can also make educated answers to questions raised by users."

Though 32 of the editors (84.2 percent of those offering political discussion opportunities) said usage of their boards or chat areas met (17 editors) or exceeded (15 editors) their expectations, they were more hesitant to characterize the boards as successful. While 15 editors (39.5 percent) said they were a success, an equal number gave them uneven results or even characterized them as less than successful.

Some who were happy with their boards liked them for reasons that would warm the hearts of political theorists. "It gives a soapbox to people who would not otherwise have one. Despite excesses and lunacies of some posters, boards remain a powerful populist tool," one editor said. "I am not used to seeing people actively engaged in discussing politics, but they did, extensively," said another. Others had criteria for success that hit closer to their own homes. "We received tens of thousands of page views in our political forums on some days," declared another editor who judged them a success. And some saw discussion opportunities as a win-win-win offering. "Traffic was dramatic, the dialogue was unconventional in political terms, and the candidates enjoyed the experience," said an editor of his site's candidate chats.

Those who were less happy tended to focus on the quality of the conversation (low) or the diversity of participants (also low). "The people who truly cared participated, but there was no great groundswell of interest from the general populace," said one editor. "The quality of discourse was typically low," said another. "The forums were more useful for entertainment value than educational value." "Most political discussions seem to attract the same kind of ranters you hear on talk radio," said a third. Perhaps this editor's comments summed up the views of those who were less than fully satisfied with their sites' success as a venue meaningful political discourse, at least this time around: "I considered them a success, but not a roaring one."

ELECTION NIGHT 2000: How online editors did it

As the findings described above indicate, Election Night was a focal point for these editors in considering their online campaign coverage as a whole. Fifty-four of the 57 editors (94.7 percent) said they provided election returns. Of the three who did not, one instead linked to state and local government sites that were providing updates, another said his site is always updated with newspaper content at 9 a.m. and "we've never `published' online earlier than that," and a third offered no explanation.

Most, however, were busy indeed on Election Night. Thirty-seven of the editors (68.5 percent of those who posted results) said they updated results at least every 15 minutes for some or all of the races they covered, and 10 of those said updates were provided "continuously." Most worked around the clock, with 43 editors saying staff stayed until at least 4 the next morning. Some counted 40 straight hours or more on election coverage, and a handful declared they still hadn't stopped. "Lil' delay in Florida, don't you know?" one editor explained. What the Web giveth in terms of deadlines (updates can be made as soon as results come in), it also taketh away (the presses never have to roll, so those updates never have to stop).

Obviously, wire services such as the Associated Press were a key source of updates, with 38 editors (70.4 percent of the 54 providing election returns) specifically mentioning the wires in response to a question asking how they obtained their information on Election Night. Twenty-nine editors (53.7 percent) cited government offices such as local registrars or the secretary of state. Although the question did not ask them to specify whether these results were automated, several editors mentioned an electronic feed (either from the AP or government offices or both), and others relied on government Web sites to update their own. And, of course, the newspaper's reporters supplied local information that appeared online ahead of the print edition; 24 editors (44.4 percent of those providing updates) cited the print newsroom as a source for the Web site.

However, eight editors (14.8 percent of those providing Election Night results) specified that they relied on their own Web staffs or resources they had put in place to feed information to the site as quickly as possible, such as "a dedicated Web reporter at election central" or "a reporter who worked exclusively for us online. He acted as a rewrite person and culled information from fellow reporters and from the wires." Perhaps the most ambitious arrangements were made by the editor who offered this description of his Election Night operation: "We contacted all 560 town clerks in (the state) last May and again over the summer to find out how best to get results, then hired high school students to take results over phone/fax and deliver forms to our news clerks, who typed them into a Filemaker database our online news producer built over the summer. The database fed print, online and TV simultaneously."

All of this Election Night content takes staff to produce it, of course. A few newspapers threw everyone they had at Election Night coverage -- such as the editor at a large-circulation paper who reported "darn near everybody, including a number of people from the business side" helped keep the site current. But more than half of the 57 editors responding to this survey (32, or 56.1 percent) had four staffers or fewer on Election Night. Sixteen (28.1 percent) had five to 10 Election Night staffers, and only five sites (8.8 percent) had more than 10. (Four editors did not answer this question.)[3]

ELECTION 2004: What online editors want to do next time (RQ3)

Was it worth all the effort? As discussed above, most of the editors felt usage of their election sites met or exceeded their expectations, though some still expressed dissatisfaction. "Our expectations were not terribly high," one editor explained. "An election section is one of those things you feel that you have to have, and that it should be innovative and informative, but you realize that, unless you are CNN or ABC, the section is not going to generate much traffic, at least not on Election Night." Others were uncertain whether the supply of information was justified by the demand for it. "We devoted an incredible amount of time to this section," another editor said. "In retrospect, we questioned if we (should) have focused as many resources on a product used by our readers for such a relatively short amount of time."

Others viewed the experience with a great deal more enthusiasm. "Election Night was a great night to be in the news biz -- and a watershed for (our site). We were able to keep on top of a flood of numbers and stories and keep our pages fresh and up to date," said one editor. "Better still, people were paying attention. We had record traffic, including more than a hundred thousand page views between 3 and 4 in the morning!" Another declared the Web has "revolutionary implications for election coverage. Our expectations, on usage and popularity, have been exceeded with every foray into this area."

But there's always room for improvement. Editors were asked what they hoped to do differently in 2004, based on their experience this time around and given the certainty that the medium will continue to change. Of the 57 editors responding to this survey, 43 (75.4 percent) took a crack at crystal ball-gazing (not counting the one who daydreamed simply about "more food, more flasks"), and most had multiple items on their wish list.

Many editors looked to a future in which they hoped to take even better advantage of the two online attributes they saw as most important: timeliness and depth. Again, Election Night was a common focal point, with 26 editors (69 percent of those offering ideas) hoping for better ways to gather and present election returns. Automated feeds were a popular idea; eight editors put automation at the top of their wish list. Several also agreed with the editor who wanted to "build a user-friendly, database application to display voting results." And others wanted to go beyond plain results, for instance by having "more candidates online for chats during counting."

Better voting guides, offered earlier in the election process to accommodate early-voting initiatives and providing information at what one editor called "an even more granular community level," were also popular items for the wish list. "We need at least basic stories on all races by the time early voting starts," including detailed candidate questionnaires in even "very local races, such as school board, because there is relatively little coverage of them," one editor said. Some saw opportunities to combine detailed information with multimedia applications or a personalizable interface, such as the editor who envisioned interactive district maps "so as you roll over it, you'll get a district description and list of candidates." However, another editor had misgivings about the value of such extensively detailed information. "We may abandon the candidates' statements/voter guide," he said, characterizing the guide as "a lot of work considering the traffic it draws."

Half a dozen editors cited enhanced audio/video applications, typically along with a variety of other things they hoped to offer in 2004. Only one editor specifically mentioned applications that would not only go beyond text and still pictures but beyond the Web itself. He anticipated an "infrastructure in place to send out current election news, including election returns, to other platforms such as WAP phones, PDAs, etc. We've devoted a fair amount of resources to developing non-Web applications and services over the past year, but our election coverage was very Web-centric."

Finally, while only a handful of editors mentioned enhanced opportunities for citizens to engage in political discourse, those who did were eloquent about its benefits. Perhaps the words of one especially ardent supporter of this aspect of the medium's potential can serve as a fitting close to this section on what online newspapers have done and hope to do in the political realm:

> "Four years is forever in this business. But the basic principles should remain: This medium is about the empowerment of our community, to facilitate interaction with interesting or meaningful people, to house `forums' in which users can exchange ideas and information, to focus on the local angles, to give people a voice. ...
>
> "During the next election season, technology and connectivity will allow us to push much further into giving our users direct interaction with politicians and policymakers, richer live chat and electronic town hall experiences. My newspaper bias as a former op-ed editor is that the liveliest page of any newspaper is (or should be) the letters to the editor page. This is the place the readers have a voice, have a stake in the `community' that a good newspaper nurtures. Newspapers have always been the bridge between newsmakers and readers. With interactive Internet applications, we have a way to enhance that role and make that bridge a two-way thoroughfare. This is good for the newspaper, good for the online service and good for the users. We're muddling through the continuing chaos of an election in which roughly half the voting public is going to feel disenfranchised by the system, no matter what the outcome. This is a good time to be in the `enfranchisement' business. We're getting great user involvement and traffic in this type of feature, and we'll be working to invent new and better ways to do it."

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

This study explored what online editors see as their roles and goals in covering politics, the types of content they identify as central to that role, and the lessons they hope to apply in the future as both their medium and their experience with it continue to mature. It found that prior research indicating information-oriented functions are key components of journalists' self-perceptions, particularly in the political context of furthering democracy, are clearly being carried over to the Web as growing numbers of journalists staff that medium. Journalists do not see a fundamental change in this role as they move online. Indeed, their role as information disseminators seems, at least in the eyes of these editors, to be particularly well-suited to a medium that facilitates both speed of delivery and depth of content -- and, if their early guesses as to what 2004 will bring hold up, that will continue to be the case for the foreseeable future. Interestingly, not one of the editors mentioned unique online content that could be classified as fitting an "adversarial" role (see Weaver and Wilhoit, 1996). If the press continues to be accused of being an attack dog rather than watch dog, it will not be because of online-only political journalism, at least as reflected in sites affiliated with the mainstream newspapers included here. While all of these sites did include content contained in the newspaper, the material that was original to the Web was designed primarily to provide more and faster information, not to challenge either the political candidates or the political process.

On the other hand, the dominance of Election Night updates on these editors' reflections about their campaign coverage as a whole may be indicating too much emphasis on speed over what could be classified as true public-service political journalism. This survey alone cannot answer the question of why editors were perhaps inordinately proud of being able to provide the same results that were readily available to every American with a television set -- particularly on an Election Night that, if nothing else, clearly demonstrated the dangers of emphasizing speed over certainty. Perhaps it is a remnant of the adrenaline rush that comes from being able to compete and "win" in a new arena. Perhaps it offers much-needed ammunition to use in conversations with owners and publishers wondering when their Web sites are finally going to start justifying the money being spent on them. References to user traffic on Election Night could be viewed as acknowledgement of an appreciative public, but they also could be seen as supporting the suggestion that such ammunition is important. Previous studies and trade press reports have indicated the business pressures on online editors are significant (see Singer, Tharp and Haruta, 1999, and McNamara, 2000). And the economic downturn, dot-com cutbacks and general trend toward media consolidation surely are not making them less so. Whatever the reasons, these findings would seem to indicate that the timeliness of the medium is a key attribute for online editors -- despite the inherent risks. "News organizations are hog-wild over speed," one observer has pointed out. "Speed is a fabulous drug. And drugs are trouble not because they don't work but because they do" (Kansas and Gitlin, 1999, p. 76).

But editors also gave considerable weight to roles that come closer to addressing criticisms of media coverage of politics as superficial and cynical. Editors expressed considerable pride over content areas that offered breadth, depth and utility not easily available in print. The sites studied here were all affiliated with leading newspapers, and newspapers have traditionally prided themselves on offering depth that their local broadcast competition cannot. Again, this exploratory survey is only a starting point for digging deeper into why these editors emphasized what they did, both on their sites and in their discussions of those sites. But their goal seemed to be in line with what Gans calls the "journalistic theory of democracy," which suggests (not necessarily correctly) that more information equals better-equipped citizens and therefore better and more participatory democracy (Gans, 1998, p. 10). And their attempts at meeting that goal get at some of what he suggests is crucial, including both deeper and more "user-friendly" coverage of politics.

These information-related goals and achievements can be seen as descriptions of good newspaper journalism -- which can perhaps be done better on the Web, at least in the eyes of these online editors. Good journalism involves getting information to people quickly, journalists say, and good newspaper journalism involves providing the background and context that enables people to make sense of the information. Indeed, one online editor said almost exactly this in supplementary comments at the end of his survey. "These surveys focus too much on whether online newspaper sites had content `not available in print.' What I see every day is that people want the online newspaper to just BE THE NEWSPAPER!" he said. "My industry has spent billions of marketing dollars and millions of production hours trying to come up with the `killer app' for online newspapers when the answer was really right in front of us. So I really believe that the future of online newspapers will be determined not by the number of Web-only gadgets, but by how effectively companies like mine strengthen the newspaper brand and identity online."

But while the newspaper's strengths can indeed be replicated and extended online, the medium also can do some things that print simply cannot do. Public journalism initiatives notwithstanding, the newspaper cannot be truly interactive; nor can the "dead tree edition" offer the ability to hear a candidate's hesitation in responding to a questionnaire or see how well the candidate makes eye contact with an interviewer. While these editors tended to give content areas taking advantage of such unique online capabilities less prominence in reflections on their campaign sites as a whole, some did see the potential, both this time around and in the future.

Of the two, interactive features offer the more interesting possibilities for significantly enhancing the democratic process -- and, potentially, the media's role in that process. In their 1992 survey, Weaver and Wilhoit (1996) found indications that a small but significant number of journalists believed it was extremely important to "give ordinary people a chance to express their views on public affairs." That is difficult and costly to do in print, relatively simple and cheap to do online. The newspaper is a zero-sum medium: Space is limited, and the portion of the news hole taken up by one story means another story gets bumped. The Web, with its unlimited capacity for all sorts of content to co-exist, offers newspapers a way to encourage public participation in civic discourse without jeopardizing their role as trustworthy and relatively impartial sources of information. Online, the two functions can remain distinct in a way that they cannot in a finite and severely limited media space. True, the discourse is not always high-minded -- sometimes, it's not even civil. And true, the percentage of people who participate is relatively small. But, as several of the editors responding to this survey pointed out, the potential for true democratic empowerment is enormous.

Journalists who see their role as crucial to the proper functioning of democracy have an opportunity to extend that role in a meaningful way. Providing credible information is tremendously important, and will become even more so as the sheer volume of online "content" continues to expand exponentially and people increasingly turn to a name they know for help in sorting out and making sense of it all (Schudson, 1995). But an informed citizenry is only one step toward an engaged and active citizenry. The online medium offers journalists the opportunity to play a central role in facilitating not just one but both.

FOOTNOTES

1. The Pew study contained a hint of more good news for traditional media sites as Internet use achieves mainstream status: Internet users with more experience -- those online for three or more years -- visited the sites of major news organizations at higher rates than did "newbies." Convenience was a prime consideration for these users in particular; most said they ran into election news by happenstance while going online for other purposes ("Internet election," 2000). For some as-yet-unexplored reason, self-described liberals appeared more likely to go to the Web for political information that conservatives; 43 percent of liberals said they checked the Web for political news at least once a week during the 2000 campaign, compared with 33 percent of conservatives (Gerber, 2001).

2. This ability to accommodate immediacy carries risks that trouble many journalists and observers (see, for example, Kansas and Gitlin, [1999], Benning [2000] and many, many others). In particular, it makes online journalism prone to mistakes -- sometimes embarrassing ones. As we saw in the TV coverage of this year's presidential race, an emphasis on being first (or at least not being last) over being right is risky for ANY journalism that operates in real-time. Still, the ability to offer breaking news online is, at least potentially, an advantage over the print product, one this study indicates is clearly perceived by online journalists.

3. Editors also were asked about the total size of their staffs -- full-time, part-time and shared with print -- in an attempt to determine how they allocated their available resources in covering the election. However, the question did not specify whether "staff" meant total online staff or only editorial staff, and responses indicated that editors interpreted the question in different ways. So the findings related to overall staffing were less useful than the researcher had hoped. Nonetheless, a couple of interesting patterns were discernible. One is that Web staffs remain small in comparison with print staffs; 35 editors (61.4 percent) reported full-time staffs of 10 people or fewer -- and this survey covered leading newspapers in each state. Another is that while a few years ago, online and print staffs overlapped considerably (Singer, Tharp and Haruta, 1999), typically with copy editors and/or graphic designers being asked to do double duty, that situation now seems rarer. Only seven editors (12.3 percent) said they shared any staff with print, and three of those shared just a single person.

TABLE 1

Key attributes of online-only content areas that editors cited as being particular sources of pride

	Depth and detail (voter guides, links, archives, candidate bios or profiles …)	Updated news / election results	Chats and discussion forums	Multimedia features, especially audio/video	Candidate "match" feature	Total editor responses
Cited first	15	16	8	1	4	44
Cited second	11	9 *	4	7	-	31
Cited third	12	4	2	2	-	20
Total times feature cited **	38	29	14	10	4	95

* Includes one editor who cited Web radio and chat features as part of his "live" Election Night coverage.

** Some of the 44 editors who offered at least one response to this three-part question cited different online-only areas in the same category in offering their first, second and/or third picks. For example, one editor was proud of three areas all categorized as relating to depth and detail:

One:	Candidate responses to Editorial Board questions.
Two:	An election Q&A "with answers to basic questions about voting, early voting, polling places, etc., with links to state and county government election departments."
Three:	A daily story "reviewing what the pundits were saying about the presidential race."

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Newspaper

At Play in the Field of the Word

A content analysis of the coverage of women's sports in selected
San Francisco Bay Area newspapers

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Abstract

This study extends previous research on inequities in media coverage of women's sports in newspapers. A content analysis was conducted on sports sections from large, medium and small newspapers from the San Francisco Bay Area. 4,152 stories and 66,000 inches of text were coded. The study hypothesized that men's stories receive the majority of coverage and that smaller papers provide more equitable coverage of women's sports. Chi squares and descriptive data supported both hypotheses.

We cannot change because we are dependent on what is wrong.
Wendell Berry

Sports journalism, particularly in newspapers, has taken little notice of a nearly 30-year-old revolution. When it comes to covering sports, "The reality is that there is an entire world of women's sports that is excluded from the sports pages ..." (Amateur Athletic Foundation, Duncan, et al., 1991).

In the late 1990s, women's sports enjoyed unparalleled popularity in the United States. The evidence is overwhelming, including attendance at the Women's World Cup soccer matches, the advent of women's professional basketball, softball and soccer leagues and the steadily growing popularity of women's college basketball. Furthermore, there has been widespread acknowledgment of women's sports successes, especially among U.S. teams in the 1996 and 1998 Olympic Games. Oddly, this has not translated in significantly expanded coverage of women's sports in newspapers.

The passage of Title IX flung open the doors to allow girls and women to compete in sports. Title IX is an extension of civil rights legislation and was part of the Education Amendments Act of 1972. It stated: "No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving federal financial assistance."

That small paragraph in a sweeping legislative document forever changed the landscape of American sports. In the 28 years since Title IX there has been a nine-fold increase in female high school sports participation, from 29,015 to nearly 2,652,796 (National Federation of State High School Associations 1999). Intercollegiate women's sports have seen similar growth, from 31,000 in 1971 to more than 135,000 (NCAA, 1999).

Despite the explosion of women's participation, little academic research has been done to analyze newspaper coverage of women's sports. Although there have been numerous well-documented studies of women's coverage in television and magazines (see appendix 1), very few quantitative analyses of the overall coverage of women's sports in mainstream newspapers exist. And many of the studies that exist are either extremely flawed in methodology or narrow in scope.

Taken collectively, however, the existing studies show that newspapers continue to lag behind in their ability and willingness to give due recognition to women's sports. (Duncan et al., Sage and Furst, 1994, Theberge and Cronk 1986, Bryant, 1981, Woolard, 1983, Wann et. al. 1998, Theberge, 1991, Silverstein, 1996).

An Amateur Athletic Foundation-sponsored report found that women-only stories accounted for 3.5 percent of all sports stories and men's stories outnumbered women's stories 23-1 (Duncan et. al.). A study of the coverage of recreational sports in newspapers found women-only articles ranges from 14.2 percent to 2.7 percent in several Canadian newspapers (Theberge). Another report found men's stories comprised 85 percent of sports sections (Woolard), and yet another found the *New York Times* devoted three times the coverage to the men's NCAA Basketball Tournament as the women's tourney (Silverstein).

Strikingly few studies have been done that link newspaper circulation size to coverage. An abstract by Furst and Sage suggests that small papers do a better job, but the complete findings of that study were never published and phone calls to the authors failed to produce the complete document.

Wann et. al. found a link between coverage of women's sports in the student newspapers of large, medium and small universities. Among their findings, the authors discovered that inequities in coverage were greater in the larger universities.

It is important to note that the Wann study focused on student newspapers, not commercial products. However, the findings of Wann's study seem to underscore one of the aspects in this study, which is that larger sports, the kind covered by larger university newspapers, tend to dominate coverage and thus dwarf the smaller sports in which women have made headway in participation but not coverage. In other words, it is logical to expect student newspapers at larger schools to be more in line with larger circulation newspapers because their major men's programs are powerful, better established, more firmly entrenched, supported solid promotional backing and generate larger fan interest.

The inequitable coverage has continued despite studies that show women are major consumers in the sports marketplace. Newspapers in particular still seem to underplay women's presence and importance in the sporting world (Bridge, 1994, NSGA, 1999, Giobbe, 1996).

This research is designed to add to the literature on newspaper coverage of women's sports by examining the coverage of large, medium and small newspapers in a similar geographic area.

It is hypothesized that men's sports will receive greater coverage. A second hypothesis is that women's sports, due to their growth at grassroots levels, will receive proportionally more coverage in smaller newspapers.

Using a content analysis and chi squares, this study examines whether a statistically significant difference in the coverages of women's sports can be documented in the newspapers studied.

There are scholars who contend that the underreporting of women's sports, particularly in light of increased participation, creates an impression that women are nonexistent (Creedon, 1994; Kane & Greendorfer, 1994; Kane, 1989; Theberge & Cronk). Thus the question has to be asked, are the media in general, and newspapers specifically, continuing to engage in the oft-cited "symbolic annihilation" of women's sports (Gerbner, 1978)?

METHOD:

This study examines stories that appeared in the sports sections of the *Marin Independent Journal, Santa Rosa Press-Democrat and San Francisco Chronicle* and Sunday sections of the *San Francisco Examiner*. Papers in the same geographic area were chosen to make comparisons between publications with similar readership and essentially the same menu of news events from which to choose, especially locally.

The San Francisco Bay Area was selected because it has a diverse and competitive news market. During the study period, the San Jose Lasers basketball team concluded its regular season and competed in the ABL playoffs; Stanford University qualified for the Women's NCAA Basketball Tournament; and the University of California, University of San Francisco, Santa Clara and San Jose State had competitive women's programs. The area also has a vibrant network of high school and youth sports.

The time period for this study covers a nine-week period from January through March 1998. It spans the end of the NFL playoffs, the Super Bowl and the start of baseball's spring training. The main sport during this period was professional and college basketball, including final conference games in college basketball for Stanford and California, the end of the regular season and playoffs for the San Jose Lasers of the American Basketball League and regular-season games for the Golden State Warriors. Basketball is one of the sports in which women have made their strongest gains in terms of participation and fan interest.

To study the four papers a model was created to measure coverage of all sports broken down by gender and sport. This method gives a more complete picture of the coverage of women's sports within the context of the whole sports newshole.

The Associated Press Sports Editors guidelines, which describe papers with circulations of less than 40,000 as small and those with circulations of more than 175,000 as large, were used to decide what constituted a large, medium and small newspaper.

Stories were coded as "women-only," "men-only," "both-genders" and "neutral." Men-only and women-only stories are self-explanatory. Stories that included both men and women as participants, such as swimming, track and field, tennis, as well as general round-ups and sports digests were measured and counted in the both-genders category. Neutral stories included items such as bids for Olympic sites, stadium stories and stories about animals, such as horse racing.

Measurements were calculated in standard 12p2 column inches. For stories with wider column widths, the measurements were converted by taking the depth of the story, multiplied by the column width then divided by 12.17. A column inch of text equals approximately 40-45 words.

Text inches were the inches of text only; thumb mugs and art items imbedded within the standard column were included as text inches. Full-column boxes, pull quotes, mugs, etc., were not included in text inches.

The gender of a photo was determined by the main character's gender, regardless of who might be in the background or the stands. Photos of venues and animals were coded as neutral.

This study also analyzed coverages as a percentage of newshole. This calculation helps depict how limited space may have an effect on coverage and news gathering decisions. The study counts and codes page 1 stories of sports sections.

Because there was only one coder, inter-coder reliability tests were not necessary. Several issues of the papers were recoded to ensure consistency. Coding records for each story were entered into a Microsoft Access database. Batch totals by paper, day and page were compared to the detail database file to ensure accuracy of the data entry. Microsoft Access and Microsoft Excel were used to summarize and report calculations based on the individual story records.

Intra-coder reliability tests were done using the Holsti formula (Holsti, 1969, cited in Wimmer & Dominick, p, 179). Tests using the formula showed a reliability coefficient of 87.5 percent. However, of the 15 coder discrepancies, all were connected to measurement of stories, and none were more than a half-inch in difference. The intra-coder reliability test showed 100 percent reliability in the coding of sports and gender. The results indicate high intra-coder reliability.

Chi-square tests were calculated to determine the significance of the differences in recorded data among papers (Wimmer & Domminick, 1994). Two-way chi-square tests were calculated to determine at what significance level the papers differed in their overall sports presentations as measured by story counts.

The study also measures specific sports to determine which ones garner the most coverage. This helps to study not only relational aspects between men's and women's sports overall, but intra-sport ratios in both-gender sports such as college basketball, professional basketball and high school basketball.

The Winter Olympics also were measured both separately and as a part of the overall news product. The papers studied all had expanded sections to accommodate Olympic coverage. As a result, although coverage of women's sports in the Olympics was proportionally higher, its effects on overall presentation were marginal. Factoring out Olympic stories, women's representation in story counts, column inches and overall inches fell between 1 and 2 percent.

ANALYZING THE DATA:

This thesis analyzed data collected between January 11 and March 14, 1998. Issues from the *Marin Independent-Journal, Santa Rosa Press-Democrat* and *San Francisco Chronicle* were coded on Monday through Saturday. Because the *Chronicle* does not have a Sunday paper, the study coded Sunday issues of the *San Francisco Examiner*, which had a joint operating agreement with the *Chronicle* at the time.

Table 1. Coding Summary

Newspaper	Issues	Stories	Text	Newshole
Independent Journal	58	1,264	18,119.0	28,705.0
Press Democrat	58	1,406	23,513.0	38,590.5
San Francisco Chronicle	50	1,190	18,796.5	30,862.5
San Francisco Examiner	8	292	5,724.0	9,297.5
Total	174	4,152	66,152.5	107,455.5

Overall, issues from 58 days and 174 issues were coded. The study coded 58 issues each of the *Independent-Journal and Press-Democrat*, 50 issues of the *San Francisco Chronicle*, and eight Sunday issues of the *San Francisco Examiner*. This study coded 4,152 stories overall, more than 66,000 inches of text and more than 107,000 inches of newshole.

This study asks two primary research questions of the data.

1. Do men's stories, column inches, overall inches, presentation, placement and photographs dominate the newsholes of daily newspapers?
2. Is there a difference between the amounts of women's coverage in relation to circulation size and is this difference statistically significant?

To help analyze and detail both questions, coverage is broken down between and within each of the four newspapers.

To help answer RQ 2, two-way chi-squares were computed. The chi-square tests showed with a $p < .001$ that there is a statistically significant difference in coverage with relation to circulation size.

For RQ 1 the data are clear. In every paper, the data show that men's-only story counts, column inches and overall inches were more than the rest of the stories combined

Men's stories were longer than women's stories and given greater prominence both with art and graphics and in page 1 placement.

Table 2 Story Counts

Newspaper	Total Stories	Men's Stories	Men's Percent	Women's Stories	Women's Percent
Independent Journal	1,264	693	54.8%	160	12.7%
Press Democrat	1,406	909	64.7%	180	12.8%
San Francisco Chronicle	1,190	753	63.3%	96	8.1%
San Francisco Examiner	292	204	69.9%	28	9.6%
Total	4,152	2,559	61.6%	464	11.2%

The percentages of men's-only stories range from a low of 54.8 percent in the *Marin Independent-Journal* to a high of 69.9 percent in the *San Francisco Examiner*. Overall in all the editions analyzed and coded, men's stories accounted for 61.6 percent of all stories.

Women's stories accounted for less than 13 percent of total stories, column inches and totals inches in all four papers. The percentages of women's stories range from 12.8 percent in the *Santa Rosa Press-Democrat* to 8.1 percent in the *San Francisco Chronicle*. Overall, women's stories accounted for 11.2 percent of all articles in the four papers.

Table 3. Column Inches Comparison

Newspaper	Total Column Inches	Men's Inches	Men's Percent	Women's Inches	Women's Percent
Independent Journal	18,119.0	9,777.5	54.0%	2,191.5	12.1%
Press Democrat	23,513.0	14,731.5	62.7%	2,658.0	11.3%
San Francisco Chronicle	18,796.5	12,013.5	63.9%	1,275.0	6.8%
San Francisco Examiner	5,724.0	4,142.0	72.4%	447.0	7.8%
Total	66,152.5	40,664.5	61.5%	6,571.5	9.9%

In terms of column inches devoted to men's stories the ranges go from 54 percent in the *Marin Independent-Journal* to 72.4 percent in the *San Francisco Examiner*. In all four papers the men's column inches were 61.5 percent. Analyzing the number of column inches shows that women's stories were the shortest in the papers on average, as a result the exposure of women's sports as a percentage of the overall news package dropped. In all four papers, the women's column inches as a percentage of newshole dropped from the percentage of story counts.

The ranges in percentages of women's column inches range from 12.1 percent in the *Marin Independent-Journal*, compared to 12.7 percent in story count. Overall the drop was from 11.2 percent to 9.9 percent.

Interestingly, that drop didn't automatically translate into greater percentages of column inches for men's stories. In the *Marin Independent Journal* and the *Santa Rosa Press Democrat*, the drops between story counts and inch counts were picked up by longer stories in the both-gender and neutral categories. In the San Francisco papers, men's stories gained prominence.

Table 4. Total Newshole Comparison

	Total Newshole	Men's		Women's	
Newspaper	Inches	Inches	Percent	Inches	Percent
Independent Journal	28,705.0	16,140.5	56.2%	3,643.0	12.7%
Press Democrat	38,590.5	24,473.5	63.4%	4,874.0	12.6%
San Francisco Chronicle	30,862.5	19,819.0	64.2%	2,290.5	7.4%
San Francisco Examiner	9,297.5	6,884.5	74.0%	744.5	8.0%
Total	107,455.5	67,317.5	62.6%	11,552.0	10.8%

And the overall newshole given to men's sports range from 56.2 percent in the *Marin Independent-Journal* to 74 percent in the *San Francisco Examiner*. Overall, 62.6 percent of the four papers' newsholes were devoted to men's sports.

Total inches for women's stories as a percentage of newshole were as high as 12.7 percent in the *Marin Independent-Journal,* a rise from the 12.1 percent of column inches. Men's stories also gained prominence from 54 percent to 56.2 percent. In the *Santa Rosa Press-Democrat,* women's total inches were 12.6 percent, up from 11.3 percent of column inches, while men's coverage rose from 62.7 percent of column inches to 63.4 percent of total inches. The *San Francisco Examiner's* women's total coverage grew from 7.8 percent of text inches to 8 percent of total inches.

In the four papers combined, female overall inches climbed to 10.8 percent of the newshole from 9.9 percent of all text inches. However, that number is still slightly less than the 11.2 percent of story count. Men's stories also climbed to 62.6 percent from 61.5 percent. Both-gender stories dropped from 19.2 percent of total text inches to 17.7 percent of total inches. Neutral stories fell from 9.4 percent text inches to 8.9 percent total inches.

This suggests that although women's stories are written shorter than other stories with relation to their numbers, when text and graphics are added they get added play. Men's stories remain stable across the board in terms of story count, text inches and total inches. Both-gender and neutral stories, although often text-heavy, were not illustrated as much as men's and women's stories.

Table 5. Average Story Length - Column Inches

Newspaper	Men's	Women's	Both	Neutral	Total
Independent Journal	14.1	13.7	15.1	14.6	14.3
Press Democrat	16.2	14.8	18.9	20.3	16.7
San Francisco Chronicle	16.0	13.3	17.0	14.7	15.8
San Francisco Examiner	20.3	16.0	19.8	18.3	19.6
Total	15.9	14.2	16.9	16.5	15.9

The *Marin-Independent Journal*, had the smallest difference between men's and women's story lengths at .4 inches per story. Women's stories were 97 percent as long as men's stories. The *San Francisco Examiner* had the biggest discrepancy between men and women's story lengths. Women's stories 79 percent as long as men's stories.

In the four papers combined, women's stories averaged 14.2 inches of text compared to 15.9 inches for men's stories. Both-gender stories averaged 16.9 inches, and neutral stories were 16.5 inches.

Table 6. Average Story Length – Newshole Inches

Newspaper	Men's	Women's	Both	Neutral	Total
Independent Journal	23.3	22.8	21.3	22.6	22.7
Press Democrat	26.9	27.1	28.5	30.7	27.4
San Francisco Chronicle	26.3	23.9	27.0	23.3	25.9
San Francisco Examiner	33.7	26.6	29.6	26.6	31.8
Total	26.3	24.9	25.3	25.3	25.9

When total inches were computed for the four papers, men's and women's percentages of newshole increased in all four papers. This indicates that men's and women's stories received greater prominence with headlines and graphics than both-gender and neutral stories.

Women's stories measured with text and graphics were still generally the shortest stories overall, although the differences were minimal. In the *Santa Rosa Press-Democrat*, the average space devoted to women's stories was greater than men's 27.1 inches to 26.9, but trailed both (28.5) and neutral (30.7) categories.

The data also show that men's stories outnumbered women's stories between 4.3-1 in the *Marin Independent-Journal* and 7.8-1 in the *San Francisco Chronicle*.

Overall, men's stories outnumber women's stories 5.5-1. The numbers remain fairly consistent in column inches, where the differences ranged from 4.5-1 in the *Independent Journal* to 9.4-1 in the *Chronicle* and 6.2-1 overall.

In overall newsholes, space devoted to men's stories outdistanced space to women's stories between 4.4-1 in the *Independent-Journal* and 9.2-1 in the *Examiner*, with an overall difference of 5.8-1.

Men's stories are also 6.3 times more likely to appear on page 1 than women's stories. In fact, men's stories are 2.5 times more likely to appear on page 1 than all other stories combined. Men's total inches on page 1 (13,701) were 5.5 times that of women's (1,507), and 2.5 times that of all other page 1 inches.

Table 7. Page 1 Coverage

Newspaper	Story Counts		Column Inches		Total Inches	
	Men's	Women's	Men's	Women's	Men's	Women's
Independent Journal	194	44	1,836.5	356.5	4,059.0	886.0
Press Democrat	216	35	1,532.0	232.5	4,605.5	1,005.5
San Francisco Chronicle	216	22	1,927.5	154.5	4,364.5	554.5
San Francisco Examiner	26	3	200.0	14.5	672.0	33.5
Total	652	104	5,496.0	758.0	13,701.0	2,479.5

The *Marin Independent-Journal* and *Santa Rosa Press-Democrat* gave the most page 1 coverage to women's sports.

The *Independent-Journal* had the smallest discrepancy. Men's page 1 stories outnumbered women's stories 4.4-1. The ratio of men's text inches was 5.2 times that of women's inches and total inches were 4.6 times that of women.

The *Press-Democrat* had 6.2 times more men's than women's stories. The ratio of men's text inches was 6.6 times that of women's inches, but total inches were only 4.6 times that of women.

The *San Francisco Chronicle* had the biggest discrepancy. Men's page 1 stories outnumbered women's stories by 9.8 times. The ratio of men's text inches was 12.5 times that of women's inches, but total inches were only 7.9 times that of women.

The analysis of overall coverage by the *San Francisco Chronicle, San Francisco Examiner, Santa Rosa Press Democrat* and *Marin Independent-Journal* show that coverage of men's sports continues to dominate the sports sections of these papers. Despite gains for women's sports coverage from findings in earlier studies, the data show that women's sports are far from gaining anything resembling equity in coverage. It also can be noted observationally that if the coverage in college basketball roundups, sports digests, tennis and golf roundups and other items in the both-genders categories were tabulated, the results would likely show an even greater gulf between the coverage of men's and women's sports.

Smaller papers close gap

To examine the question of whether circulation size was a factor in the differing coverages, this study used chi-square analysis.

A two-way chi-square analysis of the data for all coverage, with an $n=4,152$, results in a $\chi2=65.06$ (where $df=6$) and a $p<.001$. Therefore, there is a significant relationship between the newspaper and the gender mix of all sports stories published.

The data also clearly show that the smaller and mid-sized papers provide significantly more coverage of women's sports. *The Marin-Independent Journal*, despite having only 81 percent of the newshole of the *San Francisco Chronicle*, had 64 more stories or 67 percent more women's stories. The *Independent-Journal* also has 916.5 more text inches (72) and 1,352 or 59 percent more total inches. Even when the *Chronicle* and its Sunday sister the *Examiner* are combined, they have fewer stories, text inches and overall inches of women's coverage despite more than 10,563 additional inches of newshole, or approximately 88 more open broadsheets of space.

The *Santa Rosa Press-Democrat*, with a 23 percent larger newshole overall than the *Chronicle* (24,473.5 inches to 19,819) had nearly twice as many women's stories: 180-96. The *Press-Democrat* also gave more than twice as much coverage of female sports when inches of text are compared (2,658 inches to 1,275) and when overall inches are considered (4,874 to 2,290). Even when the *Chronicle* and *Examiner* are combined with a bigger newshole than the *Press-Democrat*, the Santa Rosa paper has 56 more stories, 932 more inches of text and 1,839 more total inches of female coverage.

Both the *Independent-Journal* and *Press-Democrat* also had more inches of both-gender stories than the *Chronicle*, although not as much as the *Chronicle* and *Examiner* combined. This is important because, as noted earlier, the both-gender category represents a place in which papers can include more coverage of women's sports, even if it is proportionally less than men's coverage. Unless the *Chronicle* and *Examiner* have substantially more women's coverage within the both-gender stories than either the *Independent-Journal* or *Press-Democrat*, a likelihood the rest of the data would seem to argue against, the two smaller papers would obviously further distance themselves in terms of women's coverage from the larger papers.

Individually speaking

One of the benefits of this study is that it breaks down coverage into several individual sports. More specifically, this thesis looked at a number of sports in which newspapers had opportunities for equitable coverage. Some of these included Stanford men's and women's basketball, overall college basketball and high school basketball. What this study found was a trend to give much greater attention to men's sports, even when women's sports were equally available and even when women's teams were equally strong. This was a trend that was apparent in all the newspapers studied, regardless of circulation size.

The lone exception was in high school basketball. And even in that arena, the boys coverage was often more comprehensive, despite the relative equality of the two sports.

The Stanford comparison

The two most easily compared and comparable programs were Stanford men's and women's basketball. In most respects, the programs were nearly identical. During the 1997-98 season, the Stanford men's basketball team compiled a 30-5 record, finishing second in the Pacific-10 Conference with a 15-3 record. Stanford eventually advanced to the Final Four of the NCAA Tournament. The team's success in the NCAA Tournament, however, came after the analysis period. The women's team was 21-6 overall record and was 17-2 in the Pacific 10. Between Jan. 11 and March 14, the Stanford men's team had 16 regular-season games: eight home games and eight road games, plus one NCAA Tournament game. The women's team had the same number of home and away games and its first NCAA Tournament game in the Bay Area on March 14 in Oakland.

Table 8. Stanford Coverage

	Story Counts		Column Inches		Total Inches	
Newspaper	Men's	Women's	Men's	Women's	Men's	Women's
Independent Journal	22	8	379.0	135.5	661.5	191.0
Press Democrat	28	10	452.5	115.5	922.0	175.5
San Francisco Chronicle	27	12	526.0	189.5	882.5	268.0
San Francisco Examiner	1	0	20.0	-	75.0	-
Total	78	30	1,377.5	440.5	2,541.0	634.5

Despite the almost identical natures of the programs, the coverage in the Bay Area newspapers was vastly different. In the four newspapers studied, Stanford men received 72 percent of the overall stories on Stanford basketball, 76 percent of the column inches and 80 percent. Overall, Stanford women's basketball stories average 14.7 inches of text per story and a meager 21.2 inches of total space. Men's stories averaged 17.9 inches of text and a whopping 33 inches of total space, indicating that far more art and graphics were given to men's stories.

In the four papers, photos of the Stanford men's basketball team outnumbered women's photos 6.5-1 and were 11 times more likely to be on the front page. The four papers ran 39 Stanford men's photographs and six pictures of the Stanford women's basketball team. The papers ran 22 Stanford men's pictures on page 1 and two women's photos on the front pages of sports.

Not only did the Stanford men receive dominant coverage, they also received much more page 1 coverage. Among the four papers, Stanford men's games were on page 1 51 times, the women were on page 1 15 times.

College basketball

This thesis coded 564 college basketball stories and roundups that were not specifically related to Stanford. Most of the stories were roundups of college games. Once again, the papers heavily favored men's coverage, which outdistanced women's and both-gender roundups combined. On average the men's stories were both longer in text inches and in overall space. Of all non-Stanford college basketball stories, 300 were men's stories, 127 were women's stories, 136 were both-gender stories and two were neutral. As a result, men's-only coverage accounted for 53 percent of all college basketball coverage excluding Stanford, and 2.36 times more coverage than women's-only coverage. If men's coverage were estimated to be only half of the both-gender stories, observations show it to be much higher, then roughly 65 percent of all non-Stanford basketball coverage was given to men.

Table 9. College Basketball Coverage

	Story Counts		Column Inches		Total Inches	
Newspaper	Men's	Women's	Men's	Women's	Men's	Women's
Independent Journal	71	39	1,150.5	470.0	1,754.0	688.0
Press Democrat	114	52	1,818.0	744.0	2,978.0	1,289.5
San Francisco Chronicle	89	25	1,545.5	333.0	2,525.0	536.0
San Francisco Examiner	26	11	561.0	194.0	926.0	319.5
Total	300	127	5,075.0	1,741.0	8,183.0	2,833.0

Men's stories averaged 16.9 inches of copy and 27.4 overall inches compared to 13.7 and 22.3 for women's stories, or 23 percent longer in both measurements. Both-gender stories averaged 15.4 inches of copy and 21.1 overall inches.

Men's college basketball stories were also 3.9 times more likely to receive page 1 coverage, got 4.9 times more copy inches and 3.7 times more overall inches.

High school hopes

One of the hypotheses of this study is that smaller papers do a better job of covering women's sports due mostly to their commitment to covering local women's sports, specifically high school and youth sports. In breaking down high school coverage, however, this thesis found that male stories still exceeded women's coverage, although in one paper, at least, the numbers were pretty close.

Table 10. High School Basketball Coverage

Newspaper	Story Counts		Column Inches		Total Inches	
	Men's	Women's	Men's	Women's	Men's	Women's
Independent Journal	54	50	771.0	758.0	1,365.0	1,276.0
Press Democrat	63	50	990.5	676.5	1,621.5	989.5
San Francisco Chronicle	5	0	103.0	-	151.0	-
San Francisco Examiner	2	0	10.0	-	12.5	-
Total	124	100	1,874.5	1,434.5	3,150.0	2,265.5

Overall, the four papers there were 24 percent more boys stories, the stories were longer and more prominently displayed both in terms of art and graphics and placement.

In page 1 presentation, boys stories outnumbered girls stories 41-25. Nine both-gender stories ran on front pages. There were 317.5 inches of boys text (7.7 inches per story) on section fronts and 909.5 total inches (22.2 inches per story). Girls stories totaled

180.5 inches (7.2 inches per story) and 394.5 total inches (15.8 inches per story). Both-gender stories totaled 98 text inches (10.9 per story) and 204 total inches (22.7 per story).

The *Marin Independent-Journal* appeared to have the most balanced and equitable coverage of boys and girls basketball. The *Independent Journal* had 54 boys basketball stories and 50 girls stories, or an 8 percent difference. However, the boys stories were shorter14.3 column inches per story to 15.2 inches and in overall inches 25.3-25.5. The paper had 30 both-gender stories measuring 516 text inches (17.2 inches per story) and 752 total inches (25.1 inches per story). The *Independent-Journal* had 22 boys stories on page 1 and 19 girls stories and seven both-gender stories.

The *Santa Rosa Press-Democrat* 63 boys stories and 50 girls basketball stories, a 26 percent difference. The boys stories were longer in column inches 15.7-13.5 and more prominently displayed 25.7-19.9 overall inches per story. The *Press-Democrat* also had 29 both-gender stories averaging 19.4 text inches and 24.6 total inches per story. The *Press-Democrat* had 18 boys stories on page 1 and six girls stories and two both-gender stories.

The *San Francisco Chronicle* and *San Francisco Examiner,* ran no girls basketball stories and only seven high school stories overall.

Professionally speaking

The San Francisco Bay Area had one thriving professional basketball team that was part of a fledgling league trying to establish itself. The Bay Area also had a fledgling, or at least bumbling, professional team in a thriving basketball league.

The San Jose Lasers and the women's American Basketball League and the Golden State Warriors and the men's National Basketball Association were two teams and leagues that played during the analysis period of this paper. At the time the analysis was done, the NBA was at a high-water mark, with Michael Jordan being in the process of leading the Bulls to another title. The Bay Area's other big NBA news at the time, although not nearly so positive, was an arbitration hearing involving Warriors guard Latrell Sprewell for an altercation in which he choked his coach, P.J. Carlesimo.

Although equity of coverage may not reasonably be expected, it is interesting to look at the disparity of coverage, keeping in mind that during the analysis period the Lasers advanced into the ABL playoffs and the ABL staged its all-star game, as did the NBA. This may also be illustrative of the way in which sports editors invariably favor established sports enterprises, often at the expense of newcomers. Add that with gender bias and the disparities are occasionally stunning.

Table 11. Professional Basketball Coverage

	Story Counts		Column Inches		Total Inches	
Newspaper	Men's	Women's	Men's	Women's	Men's	Women's
Independent Journal	133	17	1,777.5	160.0	2,691.5	230.0
Press Democrat	145	11	2,353.5	70.0	3,619.5	89.5
San Francisco Chronicle	150	24	2,383.5	247.0	3,765.5	377.0
San Francisco Examiner	31	8	728.0	92.5	1,034.0	157.0
Total	459	60	7,242.5	569.5	11,110.5	853.5

Warriors and NBA stories were 7.6 times more likely to appear in the papers. Women's pro basketball stories averaged just 9.5 column inches per story and very little display with only 14.2 overall inches per story. Men's pro basketball got 12.7 times more text inches and 13 times more overall inches. The four papers had eight women's pro basketball stories on page1 and 112 men's pro basketball stories on front pages, a ratio of 14-1.

Picture this

As with stories, pictures were coded male, female, both or neutral. This study counted and coded 1,449 photos. The analysis also noted placement of photos on page 1 or inside. Overall 375 photos appeared on the front pages of the sections analyzed. Of these 73 percent (275) were men's pictures. Men's pictures appeared on page 1, 3.9 times more than women's photos (70). However, when Olympic photos are subtracted, men's photos on page 1 outnumbered women's photos 226-36. Although the Olympics ran for only two weeks in the nine weeks studied, more than half of the page 1 women's photos came from the Olympics.

Overall 1,074 photographs appeared on inside pages of the papers analyzed. Of these 817 were men's pictures, or 76 percent. Men's pictures appeared on inside pages, 4.0 times more than women's photos (203) and 3.2 times more than all other photos combined (254)

SUMMARY

The data analyzed support the hypotheses of RQ 1 and RQ 2 through chi-squares and descriptive data, including percentages, story and inch counts and total newshole measures.

As the data indicate, men's coverage continues to dominate the sports sections of the newspapers analyzed. Men have the overwhelming majority of stories in the sections and in virtually every category examined, the Olympics notwithstanding. Men's coverage also dominated in areas in which it would be reasonable to expect equitable coverage for women, such as high school and Stanford basketball, and to a lesser degree college basketball overall. Even in the Olympic coverage, there were puzzling instances in which men got better coverage, even though the women's categories appeared to have greater appeal and U.S. women enjoyed greater success.

Although women's coverage appears to have made inroads into overall coverage when compared to previous studies mentioned in the literature review, the data indicate that equity remains a seemingly distant goal and male hegemony continues to reign in the pages examined here.

The data also indicate that women's gains in coverage have happened at smaller papers and are represented almost exclusively in the coverage of local and high school girls sports.

CONCLUSION

> "When one looks at the issue of the coverage of women's sports in newspapers, the issue isn't about feminism so much as fairness. Women shouldn't get more coverage because they're women; they should get coverage and recognition because they've earned it. They should get it because they "represent a welcome in our sense of what women can be and do." (Conniff, 1996)

In terms of commitment, excellence and participation, there is little doubt that women are making huge strides on the sports landscape. However, in our culture it remains to be seen if women will ever be given equal respect and coverage, not only from the press, but also from the public as a whole. Until there is a perception shift that women are as good as men, or at least differently but not lesser abled; until it is perceived that a woman could beat or even compete with men in most sports, then the "illusion" of men's superiority (Koppett) will keep women marginalized, even if the standards of comparison are skewed in the favor of men.

Building on the data of the Amateur Athletic Foundation (Duncan et al, 1991) and other studies, this study shows that women's coverage is indeed improving, or at least becoming more comprehensive.

This study could serve as a basis from which to do more complete readership studies to see if indeed consumers believe they are getting enough women's sports. It could also provide a base for cultivation or agenda-setting research.

Yet even if women have come a long way baby, as the Virginia Slims slogan says, there's still a distance to go. Increases in coverage make it difficult to support Gerbner's contention that sports journalism is engaging in the "symbolic annihilation" of women. But it's also hard to say that equity is being approached.

And yet, in the often ponderous and slow moving world of shifting perception, there is no doubt that there have been significant changes in how women are perceived in the sports world. The changes in participation rates among female athletes have been nothing short of revolutionary. Go to any playground and you'll see girls competing step-for-step with boys, being assertive and not backing down. No longer are girls shy about jostling for position to get into a four-square game. To watch a girls soccer game on a Saturday morning, to watch boys and girls playing together on Little League teams and to have the chance to watch the Women's NCAA Tournament basketball final on prime-time TV is to realize that indeed, women have come a long way, baby. With miles to go before they sleep.

Slowly, but surely, this is being reflected, in albeit a small and insufficient way, by newspapers. Even the papers in this study that reported the least on women's sports had 231 percent more stories than reported in the AAF study. In seven years of declining newsholes, that is a not inconsiderable shift. Overall the percentages of women's sports stories in the papers studied in this thesis have increased three-fold over those in the AAF study.

Similarly, the 23-1 ratio of men's to women's stories that the AAF found has been reduced to 5.5-1. In addition to increases in women's sports stories, there have been dramatic increases in both-gender stories. And while these may fail to give women a place of their own, they do provide added visibility. The percentage of men's only stories has fallen from 81 percent in the AAF study to 61.6 percent in this study.

The ratio of column inches devoted to men's stories vs. women's stories has dropped from 218.8-1 to 6.2-1and the ratio of men's to women's photographs has fallen from 13-1 in the AAF story to 4-1 in this study.

These numbers provide persuasive evidence that the coverage of women's sports is much more comprehensive than it once was.

But the same measures also signify just how incomplete women's coverage was to begin with. Although it seems that a three-fold increase in the number of women's stories is something to celebrate, it's tempered by the fact that that three-fold increase only brings total coverage up to 11.2 percent overall.

The paper with the highest percentage of women's coverage in this study, the *Marin Independent Journal,* still only averaged less than three women's stories a day, taking up less than 38 column inches. By comparison on an average day there were 12 men's stories, five both-gender stories and two neutral stories.

This study suggests the most likely path for increased coverage of women's sports lies in smaller papers. However, editors at these papers should not slip into complacency, thinking that simply printing the occasional girls basketball game story and run girls statistics qualifies as gender equity. In reality there's a very large sports landscape about which they are oblivious. When high school girls coverage is eliminated from the *Marin Independent-Journal's* sports package, there is little that differentiates it from the *San Francisco Chronicle* and *Examiner.* Without girls basketball, the *Independent-Journal* has only 110 female stories, compared to 124 for the *Chronicle* and *Examiner* combined. The *Independent Journal* would also have fewer column inches (1,722-1,433.5) and fewer total inches of women's coverage (3,035-2,367) than the two larger papers combined. However, it must also be noted that the *Chronicle/Examiner* in this scenario has 13,000 more inches of space, which is more than 100 broadsheets.

However, the above examples illustrate that but for grassroots coverage of a narrow scope of sports, small papers are no different from their larger competitors in covering women's sports. This also illustrates that exposure to larger quantities of women in sport at lower levels doesn't necessarily translate into a broader appreciation and more inclusive view of the sports world. Although the editors of the smaller papers give substantial coverage to local girls sports, that does not extend into greater coverage of women's sports in the larger sporting world. The different papers' handling of Olympic coverage is further evidence that the thought processes of editors in large and small papers are not so different.

Thus, it seems the improvement of coverage of women's sports will continue to be slow and tedious until editors change their views and presentations of women's sports not only locally, but globally.

Title IX has been in place for more than 25 years, but it has only been in the last 15 years that it has really taken hold. As the children of Title IX grow to adulthood, it is possible they will succeed in pushing for equal inclusion of women in all aspects of society. Certainly, if sport succeeds in its goals of building, community, self-esteem, teamwork, etc., those who take those lessons forward will bring them to the media.

There is also the possibility that as the Internet continues to grow, other sources of information will be developed and sports sections will become irrelevant. Women will just leap past newspapers and find better ways to gain equitable recognition.

Appendix 1

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An Explorative Study on the Market Relationship Between Online and Print Newspapers

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An Explorative Study on the Market Relationship Between Online and Print Newspapers

Abstract

A random-sample telephone survey was conducted in Austin, Texas to investigate the public's response to local, regional, and national newspapers' print and online editions. Print readership was strongest among readers of that same newspaper's online edition. The substantial overlap of online and print readerships for the local daily suggests the potential of a complementary product relationship. The print format was preferred -- even among Web users -- when compared with the online edition on an "other things being equal" basis.

An Explorative Study on the Market Relationship Between Online and Print Newspapers

Since the Internet started gaining in popularity in the mid 1990s, the newspaper industry has been experimenting with this new medium by publishing electronic editions on the Web. As of April 2000, more than 1,200 North American dailies offered online news (Newspaper Association of America, 2000). Unlike pure-play Internet content providers who devote everything to the online venture, newspaper publishers have to worry about the market relationship between their online offerings and their core product -- the print newspaper.

From the editorial standpoint, online newspapers rarely exist in a vacuum. Since the print paper almost always serves as the content provider for the online edition, extensive content-sharing is expected. This raised questions about "shovelware" production -- what content makes the most use of this interactive medium.

From an economic perspective, attention has primarily been given to the negative impact of launching a free Web edition on print circulation -- the "cannibalization effect." Such a concern dates back to the early stages of the online experiment. For fear that offering free content online may erode the print edition's subscription base, many sites started by charging users a subscription fee for online news access -- but most failed. The advertising model followed -- only with limited success. Confusion still exists as to how users determine the value of online content in their minds.

From a theoretical viewpoint, how publishers and users define the relationship between online and print newspapers illustrates the process in which a new medium evolves from an extension of an earlier format into a distinct medium by itself (Fidler, 1997). In addition, media economists are curious about whether online and print products compete or complement each other and what factors define that relationship. Therefore, understanding the user's response to the online format as opposed to the print -- in terms of usage, perceptions, and preferences -- may provide theoretical insights.

After years of experimenting, expectations of the Internet as a publishing medium might have changed. But, what have we learned? It seems newspaper publishers as well as media scholars still have not fully understood users' response to online and print content. What is the demand for the online edition as opposed to that for the print edition? Which format serves what readers' needs? What factors influence users' preferences? The relationship between online and print products remains unclear, and little empirical evidence was revealed.

While the Web as a news medium still is evolving, knowledge of the market relationship between online and offline products should be of more, not less, importance. This study is a scholarly endeavor that explores the market relationship between online and print newspapers. Empirical data were colleted in a one-newspaper city (Austin, Texas) to examine the public's response to local, regional, and national newspapers' print and online editions.

Literature Review

Internet and Traditional Media Use

Every time a new medium emerges, its relationship with the traditional media has to be defined. As suggested by Perse (2001), the adoption of each new mass communication technology has simulated research on two major areas: 1) displacement effects and 2) content delivered by new media technologies (p.251-252). Much displacement effects research has focused on displacement in terms of lowering the time devoted to the original medium (McLeod & Reeves, 1980).

Along the line, some media researchers have examined whether Internet use is associated with a decline in traditional media use. One survey conducted in mid 1994 -- before the Web became a popular interface -- found that use of traditional media remained the same during the startup period for Internet use. Respondents did not spend significantly less time with newspapers as hypothesized (Bromley & Bowles, 1995). A 1995 study found that Internet users were more likely to be newspaper readers, but non-users used radio and TV news more (Stempel & Hargrove, 1996). A 1998 survey conducted by the Pew Research Center for the People and the Press also found that the online population was more likely to read a newspaper than the offline public. But when the media habits of Internet users and non-users were compared taking their interest in politics and other demographic differences into account, the survey reported heavy Internet news consumers watching relatively less television news than non-users but reading newspapers and listening to radio news just as often (Pew Research Center, 1999). A 1999 survey examined the impact of Internet use on use of television, radio, newspapers, and magazines and found Internet users more likely to be newspaper readers and radio news listeners (Stempel, Hargrove, & Bernt, 2000).

These studies investigated the relationship between Internet and newspaper use. Methodologically, they defined media in general terms -- e.g., referring to "newspapers" without specifying which newspaper, or the "Internet" as opposed to specific online news services. As a result, a wide range of media products were lumped together, making any micro analysis impossible. This study attempts to provide a closer examination of the use of print and online newspapers -- whether people read one newspaper's print edition as opposed to that *same* newspaper's online edition. Online and offline readerships are compared across local, regional, and national newspapers.

Content-Sharing & Shovelware

Extensive content-sharing characterized the relationship between many online newspapers and their print counterparts. Editorially, online newspapers rarely operate as independent entities. The print edition often serves as the primary content provider for the online edition, and similar information is published in two formats. As Martin and Hansen (1998), in their book *Newspapers of Record in a Digital Age*, suggested:

> *The best asset [newspapers' managers] have for recommending their online services is the quality of the newspapers they publish each day. The Wall Street Journal's online news service's success in attracting subscribers may very well be because of the reputation the newspaper has across the country. As more newspapers provide online news services, there may be an assumption by those using the services that the material found online is exactly what would have been found on the same day in that news organization's newspaper (Peterson, 1997)* (p.106-107).

However, critics have been accusing online newspapers of producing "shovelware" -- publishing whatever is in the print edition online without repackaging the information. Previous studies produced consistent results on the lack of original content in online newspapers. One survey showed that more than two-thirds of news Web sites reported that less than 20 percent of their content came from outside sources (Fitzgerald, 1997). Another study of 131 online newspapers found that about half the sites surveyed reported that none of the material in their online news sites was written by online staff members. The average percentage of original content was 13 percent -- suggesting a rather heavy "recycling" of material from the print edition (Tankard & Ban, 1998). A survey conducted by a public relations firm also found 22 percent of newspapers had less than 5 percent original content (Middleberg + Associates, 1999). A 1999 survey of online newspapers found national newspapers tended to produce more unique content than their local counterparts, but, overall, the reported percentage of unique online content was low -- the mean was 22 percent, the median was 10 percent, and the mode was zero percent (Chyi & Sylvie, in press).

The fact that similar or identical information is published in two formats fostered the industry's concern about the negative impact of offering free content online on the print edition's subscription base -- i.e., the cannibalization effect.

Cannibalization & Product Substitutability

As a result, some online newspapers -- such as *The Wall Street Journal Interactive Edition*, *The San Jose Mercury Center*, and *The San Antonio Express-News*, to name just a few -- started as fee-based sites for fear that offering free content online might take away print readers. Later, most abandoned the subscription model to attain a larger audience base. A series of in-depth interviews of 14 online newspaper managers conducted between 1998 and 1999 reported no significant cannibalization effects. As to why cannibalization was negligible, participants argued that online and print products had different readerships and constituted different reading experiences (Chyi & Sylvie, 2000). However, in most cases, online and print readerships had substantial overlap (Chyi & Lasorsa, 1999; Chyi & Sylvie, 2000). The market relationship between online and print products seemed confusing.

The cannibalization effect can be understood in economic terms as the "substitution effect" -- the tendency of people to purchase less expensive goods that serve the same purpose (Boyes & Melvin, 1996). For the substitution effect to occur, product substitutability between a newspaper's print and online editions must be high -- meaning they have to be "substitute goods" -- goods that can be used in place of each other. So, when the price of one drops (free online content), the demand for the other (print) will drop, everything else held constant.

Disagreement exists as to whether online and print newspapers are substitute goods. A study found that the electronic newspaper was not a satisfactory substitute for the traditional format because the new medium was uncomfortable to travel through, unappealing to browse leisurely, and more difficult to read than the print newspaper (Mueller & Kramerer, 1995). But given shovelware production, some argued that product substitutability between print and online products would be high and the demand for a newspaper's print edition may be affected by the demand for its online counterpart in a geographic market where both editions are available (Chyi & Sylvie, 1998). Newspaper publishers, not surprisingly, hoped that the online edition complements its print counterpart.

Theoretically, the degree of product substitutability is defined by "cross-price elasticity of demand" -- the percentage change in the demand for one good divided by the percentage change in the price of a related good, other things being equal (Boyes & Melvin, 1996). According to Picard (1989), cross-price elasticity of demand can determine the extent to which different media compete for different portions of media product and service markets. However, cross-price elasticity of demand is more of a concept rather than a measure because even if detailed market data are available, the "other things being equal" condition can hardly be fulfilled in the complex media environment in the real world.

But this does not mean that the market relationship between online and offline products cannot be studied. From a practical perspective, an average reader in a typical one-newspaper city in the United States has access to a multitude of print newspapers -- including a local newspaper and a few regional and national newspapers -- the degree of accessibility and price vary. Online users also have access to these newspapers' online editions -- all are equally accessible on the Web and most are free. This study examines how people use one newspaper's online and print editions -- exclusively or simultaneously -- to explore the nature of the product relationship between the two. The existence of a substantial overlap between online and print readerships -- if any -- would serve as a strong indicator of the potential of a complementary relationship between the two related goods.

In addition to usage, this study attempts to tap into readers' general preferences for a particular format (online vs. print) -- regardless of brands, price, accessibility, and content. This inquiry has to be conducted on a hypothetical basis, but, by doing so, the results may more truthfully reflect how users perceive their reading experiences associated with different media formats -- without the interference from the confounding variables such as brands, price, etc.

Therefore, this study attempts to answer the following questions:

(1) What is the penetration rate for local, regional, and national newspaper's online and print editions in a geographic market?

(2) Do online and print editions reach mutually exclusive readers, or is there an overlap between online and print readerships?

(3) Does the print penetration increase or decrease among Web users? Does the print penetration increase or decrease among that newspaper's online readers?

(4) What is the general public's preference for a particular format (online vs. print)? What factors influence that preference?

Method

A random telephone survey of residents in one community (Austin, Texas) was conducted in 1998 to investigate the general public's response to local, regional, and national newspapers in print and online formats. This survey served as a follow-up study and expanded the scope of an earlier survey conducted in 1997 (Chyi & Lasorsa, 1999) by increasing the sample size and including two more newspapers available in the area to further examine the use of online and print newspapers of different localities.

Sampling

The survey was conducted in the metropolitan area of Austin, Texas, a city where people had access to one local daily (*The Austin American-Statesman*) and several national newspapers (*The Wall Street Journal*, *USA TODAY*, and *The New York Times*). It was also within the circulation areas of two other daily newspapers from adjacent cities (*The Houston Chronicle* and *The Dallas Morning News*).

A systematic random sample was drawn from the Austin area phone book combining the "plus one" method -- adding one to the last digit of each number sampled -- that ensured every residential telephone (including unlisted and new numbers) an approximately equal chance of being included (Landon & Banks, 1977). The sampled area included Austin and several smaller neighboring communities, yielding a combined population of around 900,000.

Data Collection

Data were collected between February 23 and March 9, 1998. Graduate and upper-level undergraduate students studying communication research completed 818 interviews after in-class training. The sample size of 818 completed interviews yielded a standard sampling error of ±3.4 percentage points.

Of the original sampling pool of 1,300 numbers, only about 1,000 proved to be actual working numbers. Thus, the gross efficiency of the sampling pool, a measure of how well the survey reached those numbers selected to participate, was estimated to be .77, calculated by dividing the total number of working numbers by all the numbers in the pool. Some of these working numbers, however, proved to be ineligible for the purposes of the survey because they were businesses (345), respondents did not speak English (43), lines were connected to faxes, or the line was inoperable for some other reason (182). The efficiency of the pool in reaching eligible households, calculated by dividing possible households by all pool numbers, was estimated to be .65. Once a household was identified as eligible for the purposes of the survey, up to three callbacks were made in an effort to reach and interview respondents. The overall completion rate, a measure of how well the survey got those selected to participate fully in the survey, was calculated by dividing completions by eligible numbers. The overall completion rate was estimated to be .61.

Survey Instrument

The survey, which took an average of 20 minutes to complete, focused on knowledge, opinions and behaviors about traditional and online media use. Variables of interest included computer use, Web access, Web use, use of national, regional and local newspapers' print and online editions, and general preferences for the print and online formats.

Newspaper penetration usually is defined as the percentage of households within that geographic area buying or receiving a newspaper (Lacy & Simon, 1993; Picard & Brody, 1997). Since this survey involved both print and online newspapers, to afford comparison, penetration was measured by the percentage of respondents who said they read a print/online newspaper at least once a week.

The general preference for the print and online formats was measured by a hypothetical question -- "*Imagine that you are provided with both print newspapers and online newspapers with the same news content and at the same price. Which would you prefer?*" -- without specifying the name of a particular newspaper.

The demographic variables of gender, age, education, income, and ethnicity also were included.

Results

The sample of 818 Austin residents was reasonably representative of the Austin-area population. As survey researchers may expect from such a random telephone sample, respondents tended to be slightly younger, better educated, and wealthier than the population as a whole but not so different as to make the sample unrepresentative.

The sample had slightly more females (52%), as most telephone surveys do. It had more people in the higher education and income categories. In terms of ethnicity, the sample overrepresented whites and Asians and underrepresented Hispanics and African-Americans. Table 1 summarizes the differences between the survey sample and the 1990 Census statistics of Travis County in several demographic variables.

Table 1: A Comparison of the 1998 Austin Sample and the 1990 Census of Travis County

	1990 Census* (%)	Austin 1998 (%)
Gender		
Male	50	48
Female	50	52
Ethnicity		
Caucasian/white	68	74
African-American/black	10	7
Hispanic/Latino	19	12
Asian or Pacific Islander	0.03	4
Native American	0.003	1
Age		
18-24	21	23
25-29	15	15
30-39	26	26
40-49	15	19
50-59	9	8
60-64	4	3
65+	10	6
Education		
Some high school	16	3
High school graduate	20	15
Some college/technical school	34	37
College graduate	20	28
Some grad school/prof school		6
Graduate degree	10	11
Household Income		
Under 10,000	16	9
10-19,999	20	11
29-29,999	17	17
30-39,999	14	15
40-49,999	10	13
50-59,999	7	9
60-99,999	11	19
100,000+	4	8

*Source: U.S. Census Bureau (1990)

Online and Traditional Media Use

Results showed that 75 percent of the 818 respondents used a personal computer at home or work on a weekly basis, and 65 percent had access to the Web -- showing a significant growth in Web accessibility from the previous year -- 52 percent in 1997 ($\chi^2 = 21.81$, df = 1, $p < .001$). Among those who used the Web on a weekly basis, the percentage of heavy users (those spending 11 or more hours online per week) also increased -- going from 16 percent to 26 percent between 1997 and 1998 ($\chi^2 = 8.73$, df = 1, $p < .01$). These findings documented the size and the growth of the online population in Austin -- one of the most wired cities in the country -- during a one-year period.

In terms of traditional media use, 82 percent of respondents watched local evening TV news and 72 percent watched network evening news at least one day a week, while 81 percent read a daily newspaper -- also on a weekly basis; 81 percent had cable.

Penetrations of Six Newspapers' Print and Online Editions

The six newspapers' print penetrations (*The Austin American-Statesman, USA Today, The New York Times, The Wall Street Journal, The Dallas Morning News,* and *The Houston Chronicle*) were measured by asking the respondents if they read these newspapers at least once a week. Some 74 percent of the respondents read the local daily *Austin American-Statesman* at least once a week, 13 percent said they read *The Wall Street Journal*, 12 percent read *USA Today*, 11 percent read *The New York Times* and *The Dallas Morning News* respectively, and 9 percent read *The Houston Chronicle* (Table 2). Compared with the 1997 data (Chyi & Lasorsa, 1999, p.7), these newspapers' print penetrations remained stable.

These newspapers' online penetrations were measure by asking Web users (n = 484) whether they read these online newspapers at least once a week. About 30 percent of Web users visited the *Austin American-Statesman* site (Austin360.com), 14 percent read the online edition of *USA Today*, 11 percent read *The Wall Street Journal Interactive Edition*,[1] 10 percent read *The New York Times on the Web*, and 6 percent visited *The Dallas Morning News* and *The Houston Chronicle* sites, respectively. Table 2 also converts these figures into the percentage among all respondents to afford comparisons.

Results showed that the local daily attained the highest penetration in both print and online formats, with the print edition reaching far more readers than its online counterpart. In contrast, national newspapers' online penetration rates among Web users (10% - 14%) were comparable as their print penetrations among the general public (11% -13%).

Table 2: Print/Online Penetrations of Six Newspapers Circulated in Austin

Newspaper		Print penetration (%) Among all respondents (N = 818)	Online penetration (%) Among Web users (n = 484)	Online penetration (%) Among all respondents (N = 818)
National	*Wall Street Journal*	13	11	6
	USA Today	12	14	8
	New York Times	11	10	6
Regional	*Dallas Morning News*	11	6	3
	Houston Chronicle	9	6	3
Local	*Austin American-Statesman*	74	30	18

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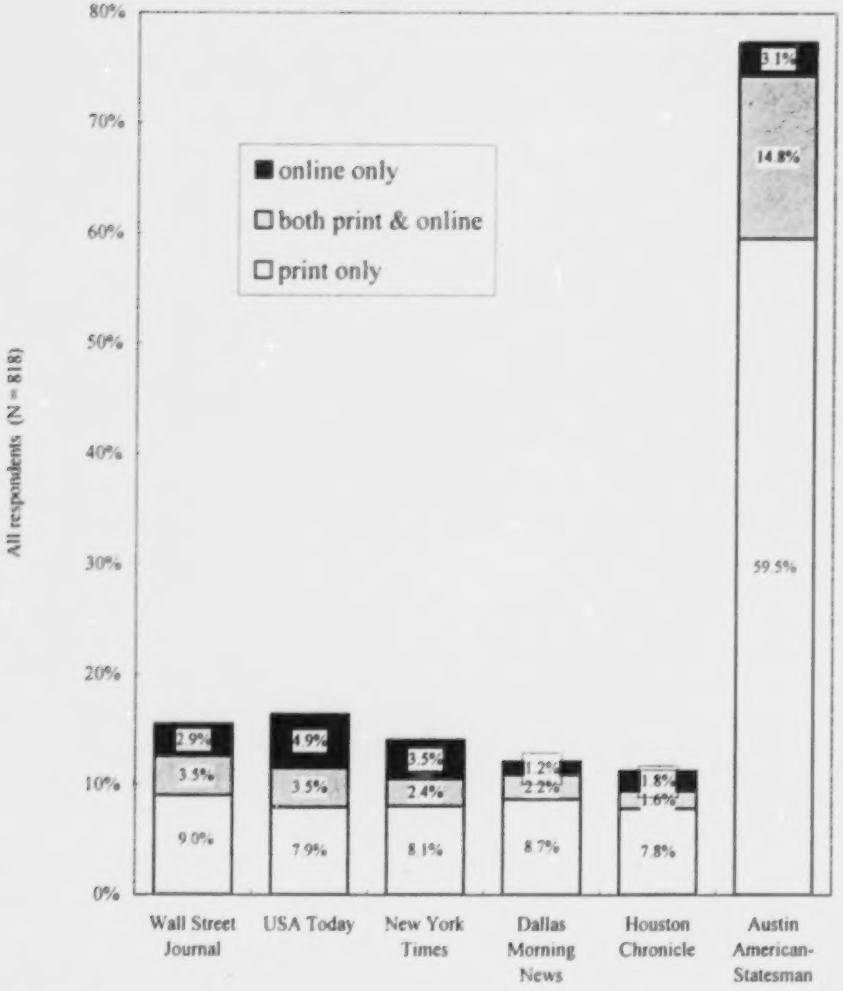
[1] At the time of the study, *The Wall Street Journal Interactive Edition* charged users a subscription fee for access to online content. The rate was $29 a year for print subscribers and $49 for others.

To examine whether the online edition reached non-print readers or just duplicated the print readership, Figure 1 visualizes the overlap of the print and online readerships across all the six newspapers.

Figure 1: Overlap of Print and Online Readerships of Six Newspapers Circulated in Austin



All the six newspapers' online readerships consisted of readers and non-readers of the print edition. For the national and regional newspapers, about half of their online users also read the print edition (55% for *The Wall Street Journal Interactive Edition*, 42% for *USA Today* site, 41% for *The New York Times on the Web*, 64% for *The Dallas Morning News* site, and 46% for *The Houston Chronicle* site), but for the local daily, 83 percent did -- i.e., a vast majority of the online users of the local news site also read the newspaper in the ink-and-paper format. While national newspapers' online ventures were more likely to reach non-print users, the local newspaper's website tended to duplicate the print readership. The fact that as many as 15 percent of all respondents simultaneously read the local daily's print and online editions seemed to indicate the potential of a complementary market relationship between the two.

Print Penetrations among the General Public, Web Users & Online Readers

Table 3 compares the six newspapers' print penetrations among the general public, among Web users, and among readers of that newspaper's online edition. Print penetration remained the same or slightly higher among Web users. Print penetration also was significantly higher among readers of the same newspaper's online edition across all the six newspapers. In other words, online readers were much more likely to read that same newspaper's print edition.

Table 3: Print Penetrations Among All, Web Users, and Online Readers

Newspaper	Print penetration (%)		
	Among general public (N = 818)	Among Web users (n = 484)	Among users of its online edition (base = # of online users)
Wall Street Journal	13	17*	55*** (base = 53)
USA Today	12	13	42*** (base = 69)
New York Times	11	12	41*** (base = 49)
Dallas Morning News	11	13	64*** (base = 28)
Houston Chronicle	9	9	46*** (base = 28)
Austin American-Statesman	74	74	83* (base = 146)

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$

Further analysis compared a newspaper's online and print penetrations among Web users (Table 2 & Table 4). Since Web users have no accessibility problems, the displacement effect -- if any -- should be the most salient among this group because they can easily access the free online edition instead of paying for the print edition. However, none of the six newspapers' online penetrations were higher than their print penetrations -- not even for the national newspapers -- which, compared with the local daily, were not as readily accessible and also more expensive.

Correlation analyses were conducted to examine the relationship between the six newspapers' online and print readerships among Web users -- who had access to both formats. The phi coefficient -- a statistic appropriate for measuring the strength of association of two nominal variables -- was calculated. According to Table 4, phi ranges from .289 to .382 ($p < .001$) for national and regional newspapers -- indicating modest correlations between these newspapers' online and print readerships. For the local daily, phi is .118 ($p < .01$). So, print readers were more likely to read the same newspaper's online edition, and vice versa.

Table 4: Online Readership by Print Readership among Web Users

Wall Street Journal		Online Edition		
		Reader n	Non-reader n	Total N
Print Edition	Reader	29	51	80
	Non-reader	24	380	404
Total		53	431	484

$\chi^2 = 62.91$, df = 1, $p < .001$

phi = .361

USA Today		Online Edition		
		Reader n	Non-reader n	Total N
Print Edition	Reader	29	34	63
	Non-reader	39	382	421
Total		68	416	484

$\chi^2 = 61.35$, df = 1, $p < .001$

phi = .356

New York Times		Online Edition		
		Reader n	Non-reader n	Total N
Print Edition	Reader	20	40	60
	Non-reader	29	395	424
Total		49	435	484

$\chi^2 = 40.55$, df = 1, $p < .001$

phi = .289

Dallas Morning News		Online Edition		Total
		Reader	Non-reader	
		n	n	N
Print Edition	Reader	18	44	62
	Non-reader	10	412	422
Total		28	456	484

$\chi^2 = 70.51$, df = 1, $p < .001$

phi = .382

The Houston Chronicle		Online Edition		Total
		Reader	Non-reader	
		n	n	N
Print Edition	Reader	13	31	44
	Non-reader	15	425	440
Total		28	456	484

$\chi^2 = 50.132$, df = 1, $p < .001$

phi = .322

Austin American-Statesman		Online Edition		Total
		Reader	Non-reader	
		n	n	N
Print Edition	Reader	117	243	360
	Non-reader	25	99	124
Total		142	342	484

$\chi^2 = 6.77$, df = 1, $p < .01$

phi = .118

Preference for Print/Online Editions

This study examined the use of the six newspapers circulated in Austin. But, generally, which format -- regardless of brands, accessibility, price and content -- do people actually prefer? All respondents were asked this hypothetical question: "*Imagine that you are provided with both print newspapers and online newspapers with the same news content and at the same price. Which would you prefer?*" Almost 80 percent said they would prefer the print format, while only 20 percent would prefer the online edition. As to what actors might account for the difference in format preferences, gender and education did not make a difference. But younger people were more likely to prefer the online format than older people (Table 5), and so were heavy Web users than users who spent less time online (Table 6). Overall, 72 percent of Web users preferred the print format. The result was comparable with that of the 1997 study, which found 76 percent of Web users would prefer the print format (Chyi & Lasorsa, 1999).

Table 5: Format Preference by Age, in Percent

		Age			
		18-29 yrs	30-44 yrs	45+ yrs	Total
Preference	Print	73	80	85	79
	Online	27	20	15	21

Valid cases = 749, $\chi^2 = 9.699$, df = 2, $p < .01$

Table 6: Format Preference by Web Use, in Percent

		Amount of Web Use per Week			
		1-5 hrs	6-10 hrs	11+ hrs	Total
Preference	Print	79	74	55	72
	Online	21	26	45	28

Valid cases = 465, $\chi^2 = 23.613$, df = 2, $p < .001$

As the overlap of print and online readerships indicated some people simultaneously used the online and offline products, what was their format preference? Table 7 shows that most people (61% - 78%) in this group still would prefer the print format.

Table 7: Format Preference by Online/Print Readerships of Six Newspapers, in Percent

Wall Street Journal		Format Preference		
		Print	Online	Total
Readers of	print only	80	20	100 (n = 71)
	both print & online	68	32	100 (n = 28)
	online only	30	70	100 (n = 23)

USA Today		Format Preference		
		Print	Online	Total
Readers of	print only	89	11	100 (n = 61)
	both print & online	61	39	100 (n = 28)
	online only	57	43	100 (n = 37)

New York Times		Format Preference		
		Print	Online	Total
Readers of	print only	89	11	100 (n = 64)
	both print & online	78	22	100 (n = 18)
	online only	52	48	100 (n = 29)

Dallas Morning News		Format Preference		
		Print	Online	Total
Readers of	print only	84	16	100 (n = 67)
	both print & online	75	25	100 (n = 16)
	online only	50	50	100 (n = 10)

Houston Chronicle		Format Preference		
		Print	Online	Total
Readers of	print only	85	15	100 (n = 59)
	both print & online	77	23	100 (n = 13)
	online only	53	47	100 (n = 15)

Austin American-Statesman		Format Preference		
		Print	Online	Total
Readers of	print only	88	12	100 (n = 464)
	both print & online	68	32	100 (n = 115)
	online only	48	52	100 (n = 25)

Across most of the subgroups in the cross-tab analysis, more respondents said they would prefer the print format to the online medium -- regardless of brands, accessibility, price and content.

Discussion

The survey was conducted in Austin and it was recognized that the Austin area was not typical of most other areas of the nation. According to 1990 U.S. Census data, Austinites tended to be slightly younger, better educated and wealthier than their national counterparts. These differences probably were because of the fact that Austin was a major center for computer technology development, the site of the largest university in the country (the University of Texas, with more than 50,000 students), the capital of Texas, and one of the fastest-growing U.S. communities. In addition, Austin was identified as one of the four most wired cities in the United States -- with higher online penetrations compared with other metropolitan areas (Survey of Internet use, 1998). Although these characteristics also may make Austin a good indicator of coming trends elsewhere -- especially in terms of Internet usage -- one should exert caution when generalizing the results.

Implications of Readership Overlap

This study examined the public's use of six newspapers -- of different localities (local, regional, national) and in different formats (online, print) -- one by one -- to explore the market relationship between online and print newspapers. The analysis focused on the overlap between online and print readerships. The simultaneous use of the print and online editions suggested that to some extent print and online products complemented each other. Therefore, serving as an extension of their print counterparts could be a practical strategy for online newspapers, especially if one considers users' preferences for the print format.

The local daily has seen a substantial overlap between online and print readerships -- 83 percent of its online readers also read the print edition. The fact that the Web edition attained only a small number of non-print readers carries a negative economic implication. From the local advertiser's perspective, the online product largely delivered a less-than-unique audience -- i.e., a subset of the one currently delivered by the print edition.

Compared with the local daily, national and regional newspapers' online and print penetrations were not so high. But national newspapers' online penetrations were not insignificant if one considers the fact that they operate in a national market consisting of numerous local markets like Austin. National news sites also benefit the most from the economies of scale in distribution. The challenge is how to transform those "eyeballs" into revenue streams.

Print Editions in Good Shape

Across all the six newspapers, print penetrations were not reduced among Web users, and readers of a particular newspaper's online edition were more -- not less -- likely to read that same newspaper's print edition. While most online newspapers gave content away for free, their print counterparts seemed to remain competitive, unthreatened in the marketplace. This could be good news for newspaper publishers because the print newspaper still is their core product. But, on the other hand, this could also imply that their online venture might not be able to survive intermedia competition.

Perceived Value of Shovelware

Given the same content, price, and accessibility, most respondents indicated their preference for the print format. Because the hypothetical question about format preference actually presumes shovelware ("given the same content"), this carries an implication for evaluating the potential of fee-based online news services: Online newspapers may find it difficult to charge for online content if the product only delivers shovelware. Online publishers should not expect users to pay for an inferior reading experience as long as a better alternative -- the print edition -- was as readily available at a comparable price.

Shovelware can be alleviated by content-repackaging, which differentiates an online newspaper from its print counterpart. As suggested by Chyi & Sylvie (1998), online newspapers should provide what traditional media fail to serve by developing Internet-specific features such as two-way communication, searchable databases, real-time data transmission, hyperlinking, and multimedia presentation to overcome intermedia competition. More specific suggestions for news re-packaging also existed (Pryor, 1999).

From a historical perspective, the Internet as a news medium still is evolving, and it takes time and effort to cross the "bridge of familiarity" to achieve creative uses (Fidler 1997, p.16). As they transition from print (the familiar) to online (the distinct), online newspapers are following the same course.

Further Research

This survey examined market penetrations of six newspapers' online and print editions from the demand side. From the supply side, follow-up research also was conducted to investigate the degree of shovelware production among these newspapers by personal interviews and questionnaires (Chyi & Sylvie, 2000; Chyi & Sylvie, in press). The percentage of original content in the Web edition was 15 percent for *The Austin American-Statesman*, 20 percent for *The Houston Chronicle* (but virtually all articles in the print edition were online), 35 percent for *The New York Times* (90 percent of the print content was online), 75 percent for *The Wall Street Journal*, and 90 percent for *USA Today*.[2] Future research may further investigate the link between shovelware and market penetrations.

This study identified the overlap between online and print readerships across all the six newspapers. Further research should focus on *why* and *how* these readers would use both products. It could be that users read the online edition at work and the print edition at home, or that some sought breaking news or interactive content (e.g., local restaurant databases or movie listings) online, while still keeping the habit of reading the print edition. Further investigation is essential to better understand this seemingly complementary relationship.

The substitution effect was not directly measured by this explorative survey. The fact that print penetrations are higher among online readers does not guarantee the absence of the cannibalization effect. First, one cannot rule out the possibility that Internet and online newspaper readers may be more interested in news and thus may consume more news in general -- as also speculated by other researchers (Pew Research Center, 1999; Stempel, Hargrove, & Bernt, 2000). Simply because online readers were more likely to read the print edition does not mean that no reader switched from the print to the free online edition. Second, among the six newspapers under study, *The Wall Street Journal Interactive Edition* was the only fee-based site, and its print edition thus should be least subject to cannibalization. Interestingly, this newspaper indeed was characterized by two significant relationships unseen in the other newspapers under study: 1) Its print penetration among Web users was significantly higher than its print penetration among the general public ($\chi^2 = 3.98$, df

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[2] *The Dallas Morning News* did not participate in the study.

= 1, $p < .05$). 2) Its print penetration among Web users was significantly higher than its online penetration among Web users ($\chi^2 = 6.36$, df = 1, $p < .05$). In other words, this newspaper's print penetration among Web users was relatively strong. The fact that this newspaper charged for online news access might account for the print edition's superior performance among Web users. One may wonder whether the other newspapers' print penetrations among Web users would have been even higher if their content had not been offered online for free. Therefore, to conclude that cannibalization was absent could run the risk of over-simplifying the underlying phenomenon. Future research should examine online readers' media-switching behavior over time or analyze longitudinal market data to better understand the cannibalization effect.

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Official sources, embedded perspective and news frameworks: How two Korean newspapers covered a public health crisis

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Official sources, embedded perspective and news frameworks: How two Korean newspapers covered a public health crisis

A content analysis of the coverage of a public health crisis in Korea from September 1999 to December 2000 explored 13 hypothesis about news reporting and selection that were derived from qualitatively based international literature. The findings suggest a tendency to: overemphasize official sources, underemphasize other news sources and avoid extensive in-depth reporting. However, the newspapers surveyed diversified their reportorial and news selection range as events occurred.

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Introduction

This section introduces some of the literature regarding news coverage of public health, provides an overview of comparative similarities between Korean and U.S. journalism and reviews Korea's national, public health crisis.

Atkin and Arkin (1990) note the public's interest in health is not always focused on new approaches to treat diseases such as cancer, AIDS, stroke or heart disease. Public and press attention often is focused on broader public health issues, such as the cost of treating and preventing diseases or equitable access to medical care.

In an overview of how medical care professionals view press coverage of public health and other issues, Atkin and Arkin (1990, p. 16) find medical care professionals believe the news media are overly concerned with the short term coverage of events aimed more to entertain than to educate. Health care professionals often allege the press makes little effort to help change society, address broader social concerns and create a complex understanding of medical issues and information (Atkin and Arkin, 1990). In contrast, journalists assert their role in reporting public health issues and medical research is oriented to entertain, persuade or inform, to reflect society, to address more personal concerns of patients, cover short term events and generate reader and viewer interest (Atkin and Arkin, 1990).

Yet, Atkin and Arkin (1990) and more recently Nelkin (1995) note this defense does little to ameliorate the criticisms that news coverage of public health is one-dimensional and lacks insight. Nelkin (1995) suggests if the criticisms about news coverage of public health (and broader science issues) are normative, the results have serious public policy implications.

Hartz and Chappell (1997) add a citizen's ability to meaningfully participate in complex medical policy decisions is ill-served if prevailing news coverage within major news organizations is superficial, one-dimensional or does not provide readers with context and diverse opinion. While Hartz and Chappell (1997) and Angell (1996) acknowledge that leadership in educating the public about medical policy is a shared responsibility among health care and medical professionals, governmental and corporate leaders, schools and universities and journalists, they alleged public misunderstandings and overreactions to science and medical-derived public health developments are inevitable if the news media's coverage is inaccurate, sensational, contrived or acontextual.

The alleged linkage between misinformed citizens and news coverage also fosters continued scholarly interest in specific news gathering techniques, or the details in how journalists use sources and provide context in public health reporting. As Hartz and Chappell (1997) assert, if news gathering techniques, or the processes of how journalists find sources and place emphases within stories are flawed, then, a) news may be correspondingly superficial and b) this may undermine the capacity for citizens to make informed public health decisions.

Signoreilli (1993) reviews a range of scholarship regarding how the news media depict health messages and finds two enduring research motifs include a) tendencies among news organizations to overemphasize official sources, especially national governmental officials, representatives of major health care professions (such as physicians and hospital organizations) and b) a resulting underemphasis on the diversification of news sources to include among others: public interest organizations, citizen and neighborhood organizations and other health related professions, such as nursing, or physical therapists.

In analyses of news coverage of public health emergencies, Wilkins (1987, 1989) and Nelkin (1995) found journalists gravitate toward national and regional governmental health officials and elite professionals, especially physicians within leadership medical organizations (such as the American Medical Association or Harvard Medical School), or authors/editors in top refereed medical journals, such as the New England Journalism of Medicine and the Journal of the American Medical Association, as primary news sources. Since news space is limited and journalists often work on deadline, Wilkins (1987, 1989) and Nelkin (1987, 1995) explain that the use of elite sources often precludes interviewing a wider range of community or critical sources that might provide a different perspective on public health issues. Shilts (1999) and Sontag (1990) find during the initial years that AIDS was diagnosed, a significant difference in public understandings and perceptions might have occurred if journalists sought a wider range of sources (beyond elite professionals and government, public health officials) to cover the disease's public health impact.

Signoreilli (1993) adds a third, enduring, scholarship tradition analyzes if attention to elite news sources limit the time and space journalists have to provide a broader educational context (to help citizens understand public health issues). Cohn (1998,1990) acknowledges a dearth of journalistic interest in providing epidemiological and toxicology background in presenting medical policy issues to readers. Tracthman (1981) among others (Ciba Foundation Conference, 1987; Council of Scientific Society Presidents, 1991; Efron,1985, Hagedon and Allnder-Hagedon, 1987) found a scarcity of underlying sociological, cultural, ethical, historical and educational issues within routine science and medical news reporting. In medical reporting, Friemuth et. al. (1984) noted how news coverage of cancer rarely provided the background, context, history, policy perspectives or educational background patients needed to make personal health decisions, or citizens needed to meaningfully participate in cancer policy issues. Instead of providing readers with an educational background or context, or seeking fresh angles, Nelkin (1987, 1995) and Wilkins (1987, 1989) found a tendency for "journalists to follow a compelling news story by relaying the results of continuing, daily news conferences or relaying on news releases generated by major governmental news agencies, large companies, or well-organized public interest organizations" (Logan, Peng and Wilson, 2000, p. 7).

Unquestionably, the potential public misunderstandings fostered by an over-reliance on elite sources, a lack of source diversity and less attention to context is a widely discussed topic in medical journalism criticism. The extensive criticism suggest that news organizations tend to select elite sources and simultaneously, de-emphasize other news sources plus analysis because these news gathering approaches are either inconvenient or are seen as less newsworthy.

The current criticisms also reach a consensus that a) one-dimensional medical news performance sometimes results in deleterious public consequences and b) imply that the problems cited might not be isolated cases.

Another similarity within these criticisms "is the dominant use of qualitative methods, to reach these conclusions. While qualitative methods often feature useful case studies, they rarely compare how criticized coverage is representative of a news organization's spectrum of (news) coverage over several years. This leaves a gap in the literature between assertions about the performance of specific science news media and the underlying issue about whether the critiqued performance is somehow normative." (Logan, Peng and Wilson, 2000a, p. 10)

Atkin and Arkin (1990) recommend the use of empirical methods and especially content analysis to assess some of the qualitative issues criticized in health communication literature. Logan, Peng and Wilson (2000) recently found there are "comparatively few studies that have attempted to evaluate science news performance over time through well-established mass communication quantitative research methods, such as content analysis. Exceptions include research by Pellechia (1997), Friedman, Gorney and Egolf (1992), Friedman (1996) and Logan, Peng and Wilson, 2000a, 2000b).

"In comparison to qualitative analyses, Hansen et. al. (1998) note content analysis generates a sampling of how news is depicted over time plus empirical precision and controls. Empirical approaches invite further testing and operationalize variables for future study. By testing hypotheses and examining news coverage over time, the resulting data yields insights about whether previous qualitative assertions are isolated cases or are more representative of journalistic actions." (Logan, Peng and Wilson, 2000a, p. 10).

Setting aside the use of qualitative or quantitative approaches, the scholarship regarding the news media's overuse of official medical sources, and dearth of public health perspectives rarely occurs outside North America. While Gregory and Miller (1998) report there are similar patterns in science and medical news coverage in the United Kingdom, they suggest one of the enduring challenges in understanding the role of the press in public health and science communication is to measure actual press performance over time and see if trends are normative in international settings -- accounting for differences in culture and journalistic approaches.

South Korea's press provides an interesting parallel to the British and North American press corps, because there are may similarities in journalistic news gathering approaches and freedoms (Kim, 2001). Since 1988, South Korea has had a democratically elected government and for the past 13 years, journalists received similar freedoms as Western nations to report news without significant governmental interference. (Chaudhar and Chen, 1995; Heuvel and Dennis, 1993; Youm, 1996). There are a variety of periodicals and refereed journals that assess Korea's news media including: *Newspapers and Broadcasting*, *Media Onul* ((Today) and *Sungkuk Journalism Review*.

While there are few studies of how the South Korean press covers medicine or public health, Kang (1998; see also Moon, 1998,) notes the broader news gathering tendencies of South Korean (hereafter referred to as 'Korea' or 'Korean') journalists are first, a reportorial detachment toward news sources and an emphasis on removing personal opinion, or editorializing, from news coverage. While objectivity or impartiality are criticized by McQuail (2000) as a myth, or by Tuchman (1990) as a strategic ritual, Korean journalists who work for national newspapers and television news follow much of the same news gathering standards and practices as their American counterparts in similar news organizations (Kim, 2001).

Akin to Boorstin's (1961) criticisms that U.S. journalists cover pre-packaged events, Korean journalists often are criticized for a tendency to overcover 'pseudo events.' Kang (1998) adds the tendency to cover news conferences and events set up for the press, sometimes precludes Korea's major national news organizations from providing a social, economic, ethical, educational, historical and public policy context within news reporting. While there is not a tradition in Korean journalism scholarship to assert that a tendency to avoid analysis affects public knowledge about public policy issues, the linkage frequently is implied (Kang, 1998; Moon, 1998; Park, 2000).

Moon (1998) and Kim (2000) add while sociological, economic, historical, educational and broader policy perspectives occasionally are included in the text of news stories, news analyses based on these perspectives are rarely the framework (or news peg) that provide the primary organizing rhetorical motif for a news story. Similar to the U.S., in-depth news analyses sometimes are embedded within the text of Korean news reports, but they are rarely seen as the dominant framework, or rhetorical motif that provides a story's reason for being.

Despite many news gathering parallels, Kim (2001) finds there are subtle differences in how Korean (versus U.S.) journalists approach an ongoing versus a breaking news story. While a breaking news story might have a 24 hour shelf life, an ongoing story is episodic, and underlying issues and controversies can last for days, months or years.

Similar to the U.S., Moon (1998) explains Korean journalists are criticized for overusing a limited range of official news sources, especially governmental leaders and representatives of elite professions. Similar to the U.S. reporters, Kang (1998) and Baek (2000) explain Korean journalists perceive a special obligation (in an ongoing story) is to report the reactions, or actions of national governmental spokespersons and leaders within elite professionals. But in Korea, reactions by governmental officials and a narrowed range of elite sources often are a primary news peg, or topic framework in news coverage of ongoing national issues or controversies (Baek, 2000; Kim, 2001). To American journalists, the reactions of top governmental officials are not necessarily perceived as a news peg to base continuing coverage or a crisis. U.S. journalists sometimes seek other rhetorical motifs such as controversy between officials, human interest approaches or events other than a news conference convened by government officials as a basis or core framework of news stories (Nelkin, 1995; Logan, Peng and Wilson, 2000a). But in Korea reactions, *per se*, are a primary framework, or the topical bases of news coverage regarding ongoing national issues or controversies (Moon, 1998). This trend often is expressed by stories where the primary foci are: a) the assertions of government officials and prominent social actors, e.g. representatives of elite professionals in a national controversy or b) verbatim reprinting of the information provided by government officials and representatives of elite professionals in a national controversy (Moon, 1998; Baek, 2000, Kim 2001; Park, 2000).

Baek (2000) adds news gathering approaches in stories framed around official reactions follow a hierarchy based on elite status. Kim (2001) explains there is a tendency among Korean journalists to first, print the written or live reaction by government officials to national news events, especially in an ongoing controversy or issue. Following government officials, Baek (2000) explains Korean journalists next seek the reactions of leaders within high status professions, such as corporate leaders, physicians and attorneys (assuming their comments are germane to the ongoing issues under consideration).

Hence, in contrast to the U.S., Korean journalists tend to depict official reactions as a important news story genre. But parallel to their American counterparts, Korea journalists are criticized for seeking a limited range of persons besides official governmental spokespersons, leaders and representatives of elite professions as primary news sources.

While many criticisms of the Korean press' coverage of ongoing news stories, use of elite sources and dearth of context parallel American-based journalism scholarship, there is a corresponding scarcity of systematic content analyses, or quantitatively based studies to assess the assertions in both nations. In Korea or the U.S., an underlying issue in journalism scholarship is to assess if case study-based assertions are isomorphic with actual press performance.

For a period of more than one year, from September 1999 through December 2000 a national public health crisis occurred in Korea. Prompted by changes in government policies that curtailed the role of a pharmacist and limited the capacity of physicians and hospitals to make profits from dispensing pharmaceuticals, a strike (that resulted in a national shut down of private hospitals and clinics) was threatened from September 1999 to June 20, 2000 and started on June 21, 2000. In contrast to the U.S. but similar to Great Britain, Korea has a national health care service which gives most citizens access to acute and routine medical care. Similar to Britain or Canada, national health insurance can be supplemented by privately purchased insurance. Similar to the U.K and the U.S., there are public and private hospitals in Korea and there is extensive medical training in universities.

A national medical strike unfolded from June 21, 2000 to July 2000 and most private hospital and clinical services were closed for periods during this time. Both the strike and the proceeding era featured an array of social actors, or affected groups that were significant participants in initial response to government policy changes, the negotiation and eventual settlement. These parties included (Jung, 2000; Lee, 2000; Cho, 2000; Han, 2000):

Government officials
Organizations representing physicians
Pharmacists
Medical school students
Medical school Faculty
Pharmaceutical companies
Incumbent political party
Opposition party
Congress (Korea's national legislature)
Patients
Civic organizations (representing broader public interest)
Public opinion
Public medical insurance corporation
National health labor and other unions

From June to July 2000, most of the aforementioned groups of health care professionals plus Korea's medical students went on strike. However, several groups acted independently, or did not all strike at the same time. Korean medical students both refused to offer medical services and stopped attending classes. From August to mid-December 2000, there was a period of intense negotiations among government leaders and representatives of affected hospital and health care professional organizations. The strike was resolved in stages but by late November 2000, Korea's hospital and clinics returned to normal services and medical students, who were the remaining group on strike, returned to classes. The public health crisis represented a cultural rarity where government actions adversely affected physicians, one of Korea's elite professions (Lee, 2000). Lee (2000) and Jung (2000) imply the incumbent Korean government (regardless of the controlling political party) normally avoids confrontations with professions, such as physicians, who have high social status and public credibility. This suggests government officials and physicians had significant differences of opinion and were unusually engaged in debates about professional and public policy issues throughout Korea's public health crisis.

Other than relations with North Korea, Jung (2000) explains, the South Korean medical strike was the nation's major news story during a 15 month era. As Cho (2000) notes, the medical strike directly or indirectly affected every South Korean citizen.

Korea's public health crisis raised most of the questions about medical public policy that can be under scrutiny in any democratic society, including: cost of medical care; access to care; rights; privileges and immunities of physicians, nurses, medical students and patients; the limits of public and governmental controls on medicine; patients rights; the economic viability of national health insurance plans; equitable care delivery; differences between public and government hospitals and medical care; appropriate compensation for medical health professionals; the cost to train physicians; the future of young persons to practice medicine; the future of indigenous medical research and the relationship between medical care and the national quality of life (Cho, 2000; Jung 2000).

As a result, the public health crisis provides an exemplar to empirically investigate if the Korean press' news gathering techniques are consistent with patterns projected in previous national and international literature about that nation's patterns in news coverage

Korea's medical crisis also provides an opportunity on several levels to assess the performance of journalists in a public health crisis. The public health crisis enables an opportunity to: a) quantitatively analyze how major news organizations covered a national event where public health issues are a national concern and b) to quantitatively assess the extent of journalistic reliance on elite news sources, c) news source diversity and d) attention to context. Korea's public health crisis also provides an international setting with sufficient similarities to U.S. news gathering techniques to provide comparative insights.

In this study, the investigators examine specific news gathering approaches within two Korean newspapers, *Chosun Ilbo* and *Hankyoreh*, during the nation's public health crisis. The following hypotheses were derived from both the aforementioned U.S. and Korean scholarship:

H1 There should be a high percentage of stories where the primary (most attributed) source is a governmental official or a physician, in *Chosun Ilbo* and *Hankyoreh* during their news coverage of Korea's public health crisis.

H2 There should be a high frequency of stories where the primary (most attributed) source is a governmental official or a physician, in *Chosun Ilbo* and *Hankyoreh* and these high frequencies should remain consistent during their news coverage of Korea's public health crisis.

H3 There should be a low percentage of stories where the primary (most attributed) news source represents groups, health care professionals, institutions or citizens (other than governmental officials or a physician) in *Chosun Ilbo* and *Hankyoreh* during their news coverage of Korea's public health crisis.

H4 There should be a low frequency of stories where the primary attributed news source represents groups, health care professionals, institutions or citizens (other than governmental officials or physicians) in *Chosun Ilbo* and *Hankyoreh* and these low frequencies should remain consistent during their news coverage of Korea's public health crisis.

H5 There should be a high percentage of stories where the second, most attributed news source is a governmental official or a physician, in *Chosun Ilbo* and *Hankyoreh* during their news coverage of Korea's public health crisis.

H6 There should be a high frequency of stories where the second, most attributed news source is a governmental official or a physician, in *Chosun Ilbo* and *Hankyoreh* and these high frequencies should remain consistent during their news coverage of Korea's public health crisis.

H7 There should be a low percentage of stories where the second, most attributed news source represents groups, health care professionals institutions or citizens (other than governmental officials or physicians) in *Chosun Ilbo* and *Hankyoreh* during their news coverage of Korea's public health crisis.

H8 There should be a low frequency of stories where the second, most attributed news source represents groups, health care professionals, institutions or citizens (other than governmental officials or physicians) in *Chosun Ilbo* and *Hankyoreh* and these low frequencies should remain consistent during their news coverage of Korea's public health crisis.

H9 There should be a low frequency of stories where there is an educational context, history, discussion of policy issues and analyses how to resolve issues (placed within the text of the article rather than the lead paragraphs) in *Chosun Ilbo* and *Hankyoreh* and these low frequencies should remain consistent during their news coverage of Korea's public health crisis.

The following hypotheses were derived from the aforementioned Korean-based literature review:

H10 There should be high percentage where the story's primary topic (news peg, or framework) is the reaction or response to breaking events by government officials and physicians, or reprinting of information provided by government officials and prominent social actors in *Chosun Ilbo* and *Hankyoreh* during their news coverage of Korea's public health crisis.

H11 There should be high frequency where the story's primary topic (news peg, or framework) is the reaction or response to breaking events by government officials and physicians, or reprinting of information provided by government officials and prominent social actors in *Chosun Ilbo* and *Hankyoreh* and these high frequencies should remain consistent during their news coverage of Korea's public health crisis.

H12 There should be a low percentage of stories where the story's primary topic (news peg, or framework) is framed on topics other than a reaction or response to breaking events by government officials and physicians, or reprinting of information provided by governmental and non-governmental officials in *Chosun Ilbo* and *Hankyoreh*.

H13 There should be a low frequency where the story's primary topic (news peg, or framework) is framed on topics other than a reaction or response to breaking events by government officials and physicians, or reprinting of information provided by governmental and non-governmental officials and these low frequencies should remain consistent in *Chosun Ilbo* and *Hankyoreh* during their news coverage of Korea's public health crisis.

Methods

Two coders read all articles in *Chosun Ilbo* and *Hankyoreh* published between September 19, 1999 and December 12, 2000. The dates were selected to coincide with the initial reporting of a possible protest by health care providers in September 1999 and the last news story on the settlement, which was completed on December 12, 2000. For statistical and other comparative purposes, the era was divided into three time periods, September 18, 1999-June 20, 2000, June 21-August 1, 2000 and August 2-December 7, 2000. As introduced in the literature review, during period one there was a build up to a strike after a possible change in governmental policy threatened to change the role of pharmacists and pharmaceutical reimbursement. Period two represents a trial period for the government's new policy and a resulting strike of more than 95 percent of Korea's hospitals. Period three represents the post-trial period, execution of the government's policy on August 2, 2000 and the eventual settlement of the strike and the return to work by a variety of health care professionals. The authors did not divide the era into three equal time periods. Instead, the authors selected the three eras where the literature suggests news developments occurred. This division provides three separate opportunities to assess press performance based on actual changes in the story's texture, the public's interest and the shifting involvement of an array of social actors in a complex, public health crisis.

Chosun Ilbo and *Hankyoreh* were selected in part because each news organization routinely covers national news events. Both daily newspapers are separately owned and nationally distributed. The circulation and editing of both newspapers is for different demographic audiences. *Chosun Ilbo* is Korea's oldest, elite, 'establishment' newspaper of record (Youm, 1996; Heuvel and Davis, 1993). *Chosun Ilbo*'s editorial page is traditionally conservative and its audience is skewed toward older, more successful business executives, government officials and other professionals (Heuvel and Davis, 1993). *Hankyoreh* (which means 'one nation') appeals to younger persons and features a more liberal editorial page that is more conciliatory about North Korean reunification than most Korean national news media (Chaudhary and Chen, 1995). However, *Hankyoreh* is not an equivalent to American or European-style 'alternative' news organization. While more politically and culturally liberal than *Chosun Ilbo*, *Hankyoreh* is a newspaper of record, covers a range of national news similar to other national newspapers, encourages reportorial detachment and makes a clear separation between news reporting and commentary, similar to *Chosun Ilbo* (Heuvel and Davis, 1993). In both newspapers, journalists are discouraged from reflecting their opinions within news stories and are encouraged to represent the opinion of sources, similar to wire services in the U.S. and Western Europe. Within both news organizations, there are ethical codes and guidelines regarding journalistic conflict of interest similar to elite news organizations in the U.S. (Korean Press Foundation, 2000). The combination of the two newspapers provides a diverse sampling of news coverage of the Korean health care crisis by major news organizations.

Both *Chosun Ilbo* and *Hankyoreh* are archived in services and both news organizations routinely win international and national awards for news reporting and writing. Both *Chosun Ilbo* and *Hankyoreh* support the Korean Press Foundation, its national code of journalism ethics and the publication of *Sungkuk*, Korea's journalism review (Korean Press Foundation, 2000). These collective actions suggest an ongoing, internal concern about broader social responsibilities and an interest in internal editing decisions. Because both newspapers are in an industry leadership role, they also are among those that are often criticized for their editorial decisions (Youm, 1996; Heuvel and Davis, 1993, Chaudhary and Chen, 1995).

Shoemaker and Reese (1996) explain that in content analyses, a range of external factors, such as changes in news personnel, management, and profitability, can influence how news is reported. This suggests that a number of confounding variables potentially undermine the reliability and validity of sampling news organizations over time. However, both *Chosun Ilbo* and *Hankyoreh* feature stable news staffs and had modest turnover during the entire surveyed period. From September 1999 to December 2000, both newspapers had the same ownership, hired a veteran staff, had relatively little employee turnover, and maintained a self-imposed and ongoing newsroom dialogue about internalized standards of appropriate journalistic behavior (Korean Press Foundation, 2000). The unusual stability within some external factors in both newspapers provides some controls that suggest the news coverage within the *Chosun Ilbo* and *Hankyoreh* can be compared over time.

The study assessed all news stories in both newspapers that mentioned the national public health crisis described earlier. A total of 687 articles, or the universe of articles about the public health crisis in both newspapers, were analyzed *(Chosun Ilbo* = 256, *Hankyoreh n* = 431). All stories were read in the Korean language by coders whose native language is Korean. News stories were archived in KINDS, a Korean news article database. Stories published in the final editions of *Chosun Ilbo* and *Hankyoreh*, which are nationally distributed, were assessed. Editorials, signed columns, and opinion-editorials were not assessed in the study.

Outcome variables were: the percentage and frequency of social actors who served as primary news sources, the percentage and frequency of social actors who served as the second news source, frequency of news stories that embedded educational, analytical and background information, and the percentage and frequency of news stories where the framework (primary topic) was reactions to events plus verbatim reprinting of government and non-governmental statements -- versus alternative news topic motifs.

Within and between categories, outcome variables were seen as mutually exclusive. For example, only one dominant primary source was coded in each assessed article, only one, second news source was coded in each assessed article, only one news topic framework was assessed per story and only one embedded educational, analytical and background informational motif was assessed, if raised, within a news story. If a story's primary framework was interpretive, it was coded within the outcome variable that assessed news topical frameworks and was not coded within the outcome variable that measured if educational, analytical and background information was embedded deeper within the text of a news story.

A primary news source was operationally defined as the first social actor or source that received prominent attribution or direct quotation with a news story. Secondary news source was operationally defined as the second social actor or source that received prominent attribution or quotation with a news story. The authors measured two, rather than one, news sources to determine the extent that official versus non-official sources are the foci of attention (or are depicted as dominant social actors) in routine news reporting.

The initial list of primary and second news sources was derived from an aforementioned list of social actors in the Korean public health crisis provided above by Jung, (2000); Lee, (2000); Cho, (2000) and Han (2000). There were only n=7 stories with primary news sources in *Chosun Ilbo* and n=13 primary news sources in *Hankyoreh* that did not fit into these categories in Table 1. These were coded as 'others' and are explained in Tables 1 and 2. There were only n=3 second sources in *Chosun Ilbo* and n=5 sources in *Hankyoreh* that are described as 'others' in Table 2. All n=687 measured stories had a primary news source; all stories did not have second, most attributed, news source. The frequency of stories with a second, most attributed, news source was n=147/256 in *Chosun Ilbo* and n=250/431in *Hankyoreh*. Hence, the sum of stories measured for second, most attributed news source, is smaller than the sum of stories measured for a primary news source. News sources are named within the stories surveyed, so coders' determination of first and second sources was self-explanatory from the reviewed articles and did not require scrutiny of external materials.

The frequency of news stories that embedded educational, analytical and background information was operationally defined as a news story where the following types of issues were raised deeper within the text of a story (not within the initial few paragraphs which was interpreted as a primary framework). The following educational, analytical and background motifs within this outcome variable were identified: medical policy; economics, history, issue resolution, comparative analysis and political. These motifs or subcategories were generated after the pre-test to reflect relevant reporting genres within this broad variable.

A medical policy motif provides information regarding the implications for the national health care system or the impact on patients, health care providers and governmental officials. An economics motif focuses on all aspects of health consumer costs, tax and national budgetary implications. An historical motif focuses on previous policies regarding national health, interactions between the public, health care providers and governmental officials. An issue resolution motif discusses of how the crisis might be resolved or exacerbated. A political motif analyzes how government officials, the incumbent and opposition party responds to the nation public health crisis, and the implications of their responses for their electoral future. More broadly, all the motifs within this variable: a) are focused on historical, educational, policy, and political questions or contentions, b) do not report about, or originate in, a news conference or press release, and (c) sometimes demonstrate reportorial enterprise in topic generation. Coders' determination of frequency of news stories that embedded educational, analytical and background information was self-explanatory from the reviewed articles and did not require scrutiny of external materials. All the above motifs or subcategories are listed in Table 3.

The outcome variable of the frequency and percentage a story's framework (primary topic) features reactions to events plus verbatim reprinting of government and non-governmental statements versus other news topical motifs broadly was operationally defined as determining the primary topic or news peg, or emphasis established with a story's first few paragraphs. In contrast with the proceeding variable that measures if news analysis motif appear buried within a news story, in this variable, coders categorized what motifs are provided in the initial paragraphs. A story's opening paragraphs frequently are the most read and memorable section of a news account, so story framework is a frequently used variable within qualitative or quantitative literature regarding public health reporting (Wallack, 1990; Logan, Peng and Wilson, 2000a, 2000b)

The following frameworks were identified in the literature as frequently used by the Korean news media and were analyzed: reaction stories, verbatim reporting of non-government information, verbatim reprinting of government information. To contrast alternative motifs, the authors added the following subcategories: interpretative reporting, background information, non-reaction event reporting, human interest stories, governmental rational and future prospects reporting. The latter motifs or subcategories were generated after the pre-test to reflect relevant reporting genres within this broad variable.

Reactions include stories where the framework explains responses from an official, or representative of a governmental or other institution that represents prominent social actors, to recent news events. Reaction stories reflect some reportorial enterprise (compared to stories where journalists reprint statements or remarks by officials or releases by prominent social institutions). In reaction stories, readers are immediately informed how an affected group, profession, or representatives of prominent social actor respond to recent developments. Reprinting information refers to publishing verbatim the information provided by a social actor. Verbatim reprinting motifs were divided into government and non-government officials to account for the differentiation made in the literature that primary topics in Korean news stories sometimes are devoted to government officials say or publish and sometimes are devoted to a similar accounts gathered from other prominent social actors.

The alternative motifs and subcategories: interpretative reporting, background information, non-reaction event reporting, human interest stories, governmental rational and future prospects reporting were operationally defined as follows. A non-reaction event story immediately provides readers with accounts of news conferences, protests, public hearings, report releases and other breaking news events. In event stories, Korean journalists do not reprint verbatim what officials said, or released as an official statement. A human interest framework introduces readers to the personality, characteristics, demeanor, lifestyle, and habits of a prominent government official, physician, or a social actor involved in Korea's public health crisis. Background information reflects a story framed around providing historical information, frequently about public health policy initiatives in the past. Future prospects motif examine the future of public health policy initiatives, discussions or controversies from a patient's, medical school student, or any other prominent social actor's perspectives. An interpretive framework focuses on broader sociological, cultural, ethical, historical, educational, scientific, policy, or biomedical questions or contentions. A government rationale is a story that exclusively focuses on how government officials perceive future prospects, interpret events, or provide other background information. While these stories are framed as providing governmental official perspectives, stories where journalists reprinted verbatim governmental official views or statements were not counted within this subcategory. There were only n=7 stories in *Chosun Ilbo* and n=6 stories in *Hankyoreh* that did not fit into the aforementioned subcategories. These were coded as 'others' and are explained in Table 3.All the above motifs or subcategories are listed in Table 3.Within *Chosun Ilbo* and *Hankyoreh*, news stories frequently convey the report's primary focus within headlines and a story's first several paragraphs. Hence, the subcategories or motifs within this broad variable were frequently self-evident and left little interpretative discretion to the coders.

Coders' determination of the outcome variables required an understanding of the political, economic and medical context during the period surveyed. Hence, coders were encouraged to be familiar with news digests or the specifics of what a few other national news organizations were reporting during the same period. None of the other news organizations consulted either were owned by or shared newsrooms with the *Chosun Ilbo* or *Hankyoreh*.

Coders were trained in content analysis techniques prior to data collection, and a pretest representing a constructed week was conducted. The constructed week (for the pretest) was selected based on a procedure described by Krippendorff (1980). Intercoder reliability reflecting the judgments of two or more coders was determined nonrandomly via a formula proposed by Holsti (1969) (see Table 1) and was 94 percent.

The percentages of first and second news sources, story frameworks and embedded perspectives were calculated to provide a context of a newspaper's performance in subcategories *within* each assessed time period. The frequency of first and second news sources, story frameworks and embedded perspectives were calculated to assess a newspaper's performance *across* the three measured time periods.

In the analysis of outcome variables, a high percentage and frequency of occurrence was operationally defined to be more than 20, a moderate percentage and frequency was operationally defined as between 10 and 19 and a low percentage and frequency of occurrence was operationally defined as less than 10. This is modified from a range suggested by Logan, Peng and Wilson (2000a).

Results

Hypothesis one states there should be a high percentage of stories where the primary (most attributed) source is a governmental official or a physician, in *Chosun Ilbo* and *Hankyoreh* during their news coverage of Korea's public health crisis. Table 1 reports the percentage of news stories where journalists interviewed physicians as primary news sources ranged from 24 to 40 percent in *Chosun Ilbo* and from 22 to 39 percent in *Hankyoreh*. (Percentages reported in this section are rounded off). The percentage of news stories where journalists interviewed government officials as primary news stories ranged from 22 to 43 percent in *Chosun Ilbo* and from 28 to 33 percent in *Hankyoreh*. The percentages of interviewed physicians and government officials in *Chosun Ilbo* are high in all of the three measured time periods and consistent with the hypothesis. The percentages of interviewed physicians are high in *Hankyoreh* in all three measured time periods and are consistent with the hypothesis. The percentage of interviewed government officials are high in *Hankyoreh* in all three measured periods. All reported findings are consistent with the hypothesis one, which is supported.

Hypothesis two states there should be a high frequency of stories where the primary (most attributed) source is a governmental official or a physician, in *Chosun Ilbo* and *Hankyoreh* and these high frequencies should remain consistent during their news coverage of Korea's public health crisis. Table 1 reports the frequency of news stories where journalists interviewed physicians as primary news sources ranged from 20 to 38 in *Chosun Ilbo* and from 36 to 50 in *Hankyoreh*. The frequency of news stories where journalists interviewed government officials as primary news sources ranged from 24 to 40 in *Chosun Ilbo* and from 31 to 54 in *Hankyoreh*. The frequency of physicians and government officials interviewed as primary news sources in *Chosun Ilbo* are high across the three measured time periods and consistent with the hypothesis. The frequency of physicians interviewed as a primary news source are high in *Hankyoreh* across the three measured time periods and are consistent with the hypothesis. The frequency of interviewed government officials are high in *Hankyoreh* in two of the three time periods, but from June 21-July 2000, dipped to 17, which is operationally defined as a moderate percentage. This finding marginally rejects part of Hypothesis 1. However, the overall findings suggest a high percentage of interviewing physicians and government officials in both newspapers.

Table 1 reports the frequency of news stories where journalists interviewed physicians as a primary news source varied significantly in *Hankyoreh* across the three measured time periods (x=6.5) but did not vary significantly in *Chosun Ilbo*. In a reversal, the frequency of news stories where journalists interviewed government officials as a primary news source varied significantly in *Chosun Ilbo* across all three time periods (X=6.2), but did not vary significantly in *Hankyoreh*. The latter results indicate there is a shift in the frequency, or extent, each news organizations use physicians and governmental officials as primary news sources over time. However, the empirical differences marginally challenge previous qualitative assumptions, since most of the overall frequencies of interviewing physicians and government officials as primary sources in both newspapers remained high.

Hypothesis three states there should be a low percentage of stories where the primary (most attributed) news source represents groups, health care professionals, institutions or citizens (other than governmental officials or a physician) in *Chosun Ilbo* and *Hankyoreh* during their news coverage of Korea's public health crisis. Table two reports the percentage of civic groups, pharmacists, medical school students, patients, incumbent political party, multiple, medical school faculty, congressional leaders, opposition party, general public, pharmaceutical companies and multiple news sources used as primary news sources in *Chosun Ilbo* and *Hankyoreh* during the three, assessed time periods. Since the pattern of the findings are similar in many of the twelve categories, the authors will report aggregate findings and then, note the exceptions. Table 1 reports the percentage where pharmacists, patients, the incumbent party, medical school faculty, congress, opposition party, general public and pharmaceutical companies are primary news sources are low in *Chosun Ilbo* and *Hankyoreh* in all three measured time periods. For example, Table 1 reports the stories where patients are the primary news source ranged from 0 to 7 percent in *Chosun Ilbo* and 3 to 5 percent in *Hankyoreh.*

In contrast, Table 1 reports the percentage of news stories where civic groups were a primary news source ranged from 3 to 12 percent in *Chosun Ilbo* across the three time periods and from 8 to 11 percent in *Hankyoreh* during the three measured time periods. Table 1 reports the percentages where medical school students were a primary news source in *Chosun Ilbo* ranged from 2 to 11 percent. The findings indicate the use of civic groups is moderate (rather than low) in the first time period in *Hankyoreh* and is moderate the third time period in *Chosun Ilbo.* The percentage where medical school students are a primary news source also is moderate in the third period in *Chosun Ilbo.* While the latter findings are inconsistent with the hypothesis, the aggregate findings suggest the use of categories of other primary news sources (beside government officials and physicians) is low, which provides partial support to hypothesis three.

Hypothesis four states should be a low frequency of stories where the primary (most attributed) news source represents groups, health care professionals, institutions or citizens (other than governmental officials or physicians) in *Chosun Ilbo* and *Hankyoreh* and these low frequencies should remain consistent during their news coverage of Korea's public health crisis.

Table 1 reports the frequency of civic groups, pharmacists, medical school students, patients, incumbent political party, others, medical school faculty, congressional leaders, opposition party, general public pharmaceutical companies and multiple news sources used as primary news sources in *Chosun Ilbo* and *Hankyoreh* during the three, assessed time periods. Since the findings have a similar pattern in many of the twelve categories, the authors will report aggregate findings and then, note the exceptions. Table 1 reports the frequency of pharmacists, medical school students, patients, the incumbent party, medical school faculty, opposition party, general public and pharmaceutical companies as primary news sources mostly are low in *Chosun Ilbo* and *Hankyoreh* in all three measured time periods.

Table 1 reports an exception to this pattern is the frequency of news stories where civic groups are a primary news source. In the third period the frequency of civic groups is moderate (not low) in *Chosun Ilbo* and the frequency of civic groups used as primary news sources is moderate in *Hankyoreh* in all three time periods. Other exceptions include: the frequency where medical school students are a primary news source in *Hankyoreh* is moderate in the third reporting period The frequency where congressional officials are a primary news source was moderate in the second period in *Hankyoreh.* While the latter findings are inconsistent with the hypothesis, the aggregate findings suggest the frequency of subcategories of other primary news sources (beside government officials and physicians) is low across all three time periods, which provides equivocal support to hypothesis four.

Hypothesis five suggests there should be a high percentage of stories where the second, most attributed news source is a governmental official or a physician, in *Chosun Ilbo* and *Hankyoreh* during their news coverage of Korea's public health crisis. Table 2 reports the percentage of news stories where journalists interviewed physicians as a second news sources ranged from 22 to 30 percent in *Chosun Ilbo* and from 22 to 36 percent in *Hankyoreh*. The percentage of news stories where journalists interviewed government officials as primary news stories ranged from 17 to 30 percent in *Chosun Ilbo* and from 18 to 30 percent in *Hankyoreh*. The percentages of interviewed physicians and government officials in *Chosun Ilbo* as second news sources are high in all three measured time periods. The percentages of physicians interviewed as second news sources are high in *Hankyoreh* and *Chosun Ilbo* in all of the three measured time periods. The percentages of government officials interviewed as second news sources is high in *Chosun Ilbo* and *Hankyoreh* in the first and second time period, but are moderate in the third time period for both newspapers. These findings are striking because fewer news articles was n=147/256 in *Chosun Ilbo* and n=250/431in *Hankyoreh* used second compared to primary news sources. While some reported findings are inconsistent with the hypothesis. Table 2 suggests partial support for hypothesis five.

Hypothesis six states there should be a high frequency of stories where the second. most attributed news source is a governmental official or a physician, in *Chosun Ilbo* and *Hankyoreh* and these high frequencies should remain consistent during their news coverage of Korea's public health crisis. Table 2 reports the frequency of news stories where journalists interviewed physicians as a second news source ranged from 10 to 16 in *Chosun Ilbo* and from 11 to 38 in *Hankyoreh*. The frequency of news stories where journalists interviewed government officials as second news sources ranged from 9 to 15 in *Chosun Ilbo* and from 15 to 19 in *Hankyoreh*. The frequency of physicians and government officials interviewed as second news sources in *Chosun Ilbo* are moderate across all of the three measured time periods, which is inconsistent with the first part of the hypothesis. The frequency of physicians interviewed as a second news source are moderate in the first and high in the second and third measured time period within *Hankyoreh*, which is partially inconsistent with the first part of the hypothesis. The frequency of interviewed government officials also are moderate in *Hankyoreh* in all three time periods, which is inconsistent with the first part of the hypothesis. These findings are striking because fewer news articles was n=147/256 in *Chosun Ilbo* and n=250/431in *Hankyoreh* used second compared to primary news sources.

Table 2 reports the frequency of news stories where journalists interviewed physicians as a second news source did not vary significantly in *Hankyoreh* and *Chosun Ilbo* across the three measured time periods. The frequency of news stories where journalists interviewed government officials as a second news source did not vary significantly in *Chosun Ilbo* or *Hankyoreh* across all three time periods. The latter results indicate there is a not shift within in the frequency each news organizations use physicians and governmental officials as a second news sources across time. This finding supports the second part of hypothesis six. However, an empirical consistency across all three time periods marginally challenges previous qualitative assumptions, since the frequencies of reporting physicians and government officials as a second news source tended to be moderate. As a result, hypothesis six is rejected.

Hypothesis seven states there should be a low percentage of stories where the second. most attributed news source represents groups, health care professionals institutions or citizens (other than governmental officials or physicians) in *Chosun Ilbo* and *Hankyoreh* during their news coverage of Korea's public health crisis. Table 2 reports the percentage of civic groups, pharmacists, medical school students, patients, incumbent political party, multiple, medical school faculty, congressional leaders, opposition party, general public, pharmaceutical companies and multiple news sources used as second, most attributed news source in *Chosun Ilbo* and *Hankyoreh* during the three, assessed time periods. Since the findings have a similar pattern in many of the twelve subcategories, the authors will report aggregate findings and then, note the exceptions. Table 2 reports the percentages of the incumbent party, medical school faculty, congress, opposition party, general public, others and pharmaceutical companies as second news sources are low in *Chosun Ilbo* and *Hankyoreh* across all three measured time periods. Table 2 reports the percentage where medical school students served as a second news source is low during the first and second time period in *Chosun Ilbo* and *Hankyoreh*. The percentage of reporting where pharmacists served as second news sources is low in *Chosun Ilbo* during the first time period and is low in *Hankyoreh* during the first and third time periods. The percentage of multiple (more than one second news source) is low in *Chosun Ilbo* during the second and third time period and is low in *Hankyoreh* during the second and third time period.

The exceptions are: the percentage where medical school students are a second news source is moderate (not low) in the third period in *Chosun Ilbo* and *Hankyoreh*. The percentage where pharmacists are a second news source is moderate in the second and third period in *Chosun Ilbo* and is moderate in *Hankyoreh* in the second of the three periods measured. The percentage where multiple sources represented a second news source is moderate in the first of the three measured periods in *Chosun Ilbo* and *Hankyoreh*. The percentage where civic groups represented a second attributed news source is moderate in the first of the three measured periods in *Hankyoreh*. These findings are striking because fewer news articles was n=147/256 in *Chosun Ilbo* and n=250/431in *Hankyoreh* used second compared to primary news sources. While the latter findings are inconsistent with the hypothesis, the aggregate findings suggest the use of categories of other second news sources (beside government officials and physicians) is low, which provides partial support to hypothesis seven.

Hypothesis eight states there should be a low frequency of stories where the second, most attributed news source represents groups, health care professionals, institutions or citizens (other than governmental officials or physicians) in *Chosun Ilbo* and *Hankyoreh* and these low frequencies should remain consistent during their news coverage of Korea's public health crisis. Table 2 reports the frequency of civic groups, pharmacists, medical school students, patients, incumbent political party, others, medical school faculty, congressional leaders, opposition party, general public, pharmaceutical companies and multiple news sources used as the second, most attributed news source in *Chosun Ilbo* and *Hankyoreh* during the three, assessed time periods. Since the findings are similar in many of the twelve subcategories, the authors will report aggregate findings and then, note the exceptions. Table 1 reports the frequency of civic groups, patients, the incumbent party, medical school faculty, opposition party, others, congressional officials, the general public and pharmaceutical companies as second news sources are low in *Chosun Ilbo* and *Hankyoreh* across all three measured time periods. In nine of the 12 subcategories within this variable, the frequency of using second sources is low in all three time periods in both newspapers..

Table 2 reports the frequency pharmacists are a second news source is low in all three time periods in *Chosun Ilbo* and in the first and third time period in *Hankyoreh*. The frequency medical students are a second news source is low in all three time periods in Chosun Ilbo and in the first and second time period in *Hankyoreh.* The frequency multiple sources are a second, most attributed news source is low in *Chosun Ilbo* in all three time periods and is low in the second and third time period in *Hankyoreh.*

In contrast, Table 2 reports the frequency pharmacists are a second news source is moderate (not low) in the second time period in *Hankyoreh.* The frequency where medical school students are a second, most attributed news source is moderate in the third measured period in *Hankyoreh.* The frequency where multiple sources are a second, most attributed news source is moderate in the first of three measured periods in *Hankyoreh.* These findings are striking because fewer news articles was n=147/256 in *Chosun Ilbo* and n=250/431in *Hankyoreh* used second compared to primary news sources. While these individual findings are inconsistent with the first part of the hypothesis, the aggregate findings provide partial support for the first part of hypothesis eight.

Table 2 reports the frequency of use of second sources did not vary significantly in the frequency pharmacists, civic groups and patients are second sources in *Chosun Ilbo* and *Hankyoreh.* Table 2 reports the consistency across time could not be calculated in 11 of the 22 possible subcategories because individual frequencies are zero or below five in many of the data points. In contrast, the frequency of the use of medical school students as second news sources varied significantly across the three time periods in *Hankyoreh* (X=6.1). The frequency of the use of multiple news sources varied significantly across the three time periods in both *Chosun Ilbo* (X=6) and *Hankyoreh* (X=11.5). The frequency of the use of the opposition party as a second news source varied significant across the three time periods in *Hankyoreh* (X=6.97). While these inconsistencies marginally challenge the second part of hypothesis eight, the overall findings suggest most of the use of second news sources was low and the low frequency of news sources in subcategories other than physicians and governmental officials was partially consistent with previous qualitative findings. Hypothesis eight receives partial support.

Hypothesis nine states there should be a low frequency of stories where there is an educational context, history, discussion of policy issues and analyses how to resolve issues (placed within the text of the article rather than the lead paragraphs) in *Chosun Ilbo* and *Hankyoreh* and these low percentages should remain consistent during their news coverage of Korea's public health crisis. Table 4 reports the frequency of news stories with medical policy perspectives, economic perspectives, historical background, an issue resolution perspective, a comparative analytical perspective and political analyses all are low in *Chosun Ilbo* and *Hankyoreh* across all three time periods. For example, the frequency of medical policy perspective stories in *Chosun Ilbo* ranged from 3 to 5 across all time periods and from 1 to 3 in *Hankyoreh* across all three time periods. Table four reports an across the time period calculation was not performed for any of the subcategories since there are zeros and frequencies below five in many of the data points. However, Table 4 reports the aggregate frequencies for each subcategory in *Chosun Ilbo* and Hankyoreh are consistent with hypothesis nine, which receives partial support.

Hypothesis 10 states there should be high percentage where the story's primary topic (news peg, or framework) is the reaction or response to breaking events by government officials and physicians, or reprinting of information provided by government officials and prominent social actors in *Chosun Ilbo* and *Hankyoreh* during their news coverage of Korea's public health crisis. Table 3 reports the percentage of news stories that featured reactions as a primary topic ranged from 37 to 42 percent in *Chosun Ilbo* and from 43 to 48 percent in *Hankyoreh*. The percentage of news stories which reprinting non-governmental information ranged from 10 to 13 percent in *Chosun Ilbo* and from 17 to 18 percent in *Hankyoreh*. The percentage of news stories which reprinted governmental information ranged from 11 to 21 percent in *Chosun Ilbo* and from 14 to 16 percent in *Hankyoreh*. The percentage of news stories that featured reactions is high in both newspapers in all three time periods, as hypothesized. In contrast, Table 4 reports the percentage of where the story's primary topic is reporting non-governmental information is low in the first and third time period in *Chosun Ilbo* and is moderate in the second time period. The percentage where the story's primary topic is reprinting government information is moderate in the second and third period in *Chosun Ilbo* and is moderate in all three periods in *Hankyoreh*. Although the percentage of stories framed around reactions is high, as expected, the other primary topics are mostly inconsistent with projections. As a result, hypothesis 10 is partially rejected.

Hypothesis 11 states there should be high frequency where the story's primary topic (news peg, or framework) is the reaction or response to breaking events by government officials and physicians, or reprinting of information provided by government officials and prominent social actors in *Chosun Ilbo* and *Hankyoreh* and these high frequencies should remain consistent during their news coverage of Korea's public health crisis. Table 3 reports the frequency of news stories that featured reactions as a primary topic ranged from 31 to 39 in *Chosun Ilbo* and from 40 to 82 in *Hankyoreh*. The frequency of news stories that reprinted non-governmental information ranged from 8 to 10 in *Chosun Ilbo* and from 16 to 33 in *Hankyoreh*. The frequency of news stories which reprinted governmental information ranged from 9 to 20 in *Chosun Ilbo* and from 15 to 25 in *Hankyoreh*. Table 3 reports the frequency of stories that featured reactions as a primary topic is high across all three time periods in *Chosun Ilbo* and *Hankyoreh*. The frequency of stories that reprinted governmental information is high in the first period in *Chosun Ilbo* and in the second and third time periods in *Hankyoreh*. The frequency of stories that reprinted non-government information is high in the second and third periods in *Hankyoreh*. In contrast to the hypothesis, the frequency of reprinting non-governmental information in *Chosun Ilbo* is low to moderate across all three time periods. The frequency of reprinting government information is moderate in the first time period in *Hankyoreh* and is moderate during the second and third time period in *Chosun Ilbo*. The aggregate of the findings suggest equivocal support for the first part of the hypothesis.

Table 3 also reports the frequency of reactions, reprinting non-governmental information and reprinting government information did not vary (or was consistent) across all three time periods in both newspapers. While this seems to be consistent with the hypothesis, overall support remains equivocal because the frequencies in two categories (reprinting non-governmental and governmental information) are moderate to low, which challenges previous qualitative findings.

Hypothesis 12 states there should be a low percentage of stories where the story's primary topic (news peg, or framework) is framed on topics other than a reaction or response to breaking events by government officials and physicians, or reprinting of information provided by governmental and non-governmental officials in *Chosun Ilbo* and *Hankyoreh*. Table 3 reports the percentages where a story's primary topic includes the following subcategories: interpretive reporting, background information, non-reaction reporting about events, human interest motifs, other, stories based on the government's rationale and reporting about future prospects. Since the findings are similar in many of the seven subcategories, the authors will report aggregate findings and then, note the exceptions. Table three reports the percentages of interpretive background information, non-reaction reporting about events, human interest motifs, stories based on the government's rationale and reporting about future prospects and others as primary news frameworks are mostly low in *Chosun Ilbo* and *Hankyoreh* across all three measured time periods. The exceptions are: the percentage of interpretative reporting as a primary news topic is moderate (not low) in *Chosun Ilbo* across all three time periods and the percentage of non-reaction event reporting is moderate in *Hankyoreh* in the third time period. Although these two findings are inconsistent with expectations, the overall findings suggest partial support for hypothesis 12.

Hypothesis 13 states there should be a low frequency where the story's primary topic (news peg, or framework) is framed on topics other than a reaction or response to breaking events by government officials and physicians, or reprinting of information provided by governmental and non-governmental officials and these low frequencies should remain consistent in *Chosun Ilbo* and *Hankyoreh* during their news coverage of Korea's public health crisis. Table 3 reports the frequencies where a story's primary topic includes the following subcategories: interpretive reporting, background information, non-reaction reporting about events, human interest motifs, other, stories based on the government's rationale and reporting about future prospects. Since the findings are similar in many of the seven subcategories, the authors will report aggregate findings and then, note the exceptions. Table 3 reports the frequencies of interpretive background information, non-reaction reporting about events, human interest motifs, other, stories based on the government's rationale and reporting about future prospects as primary news frameworks are mostly low in *Chosun Ilbo* and *Hankyoreh* across all three measured time periods. The exceptions are: the frequency of interpretative reporting as a primary news topic is moderate (not low) in *Chosun Ilbo* across all three time periods, the frequency of background information is moderate in *Hankyoreh* in the second and third measured time period, the frequency of non-reaction event reporting is moderate in *Hankyoreh* in the second time period and the frequency of human interest framing is moderate in *Hankyoreh* in the third reported period. Although these latter findings are inconsistent with expectations, the overall findings suggest modest support for the first part of hypothesis 13.

Table 3 reports while the frequency of interpretive reporting did not vary in *Chosun Ilbo* across the time periods, the frequency of interpretative reporting varied significantly in *Hankyoreh* across the three time periods (X=14). Table three reports while the frequency of non-reaction event reporting about events did not vary in *Hankyoreh* across the three time periods, the frequency of non-reaction event reporting varied significantly in *Chosun Ilbo* during the three time periods (X=8.6). Table 3 reports changes in frequencies of government rationale, future prospects reporting and others were not calculated because data points had zero or frequencies less than five. Overall, while there are modest findings that interpretive reporting and non-reaction event reporting vary across time in one newspaper, there is partial support for hypothesis 13 because the frequencies in most subcategories were low and tended not to vary over time.

Conclusions

One of the study's 13 hypotheses was supported. This hypothesis predicted the percentage of government officials and physicians as primary sources should be high in *Chosun Ilbo* and *Hankyoreh* across the three measured time periods.

Eight of the study's 13 hypothesis received partial support. They are:

* The frequency of government officials and physicians as primary sources was mostly high and consistent in *Chosun Ilbo* and Hankyoreh across the three measured time periods.

* The percentage of social actors other than government officials and physicians as primary sources was mostly low and consistent in *Chosun Ilbo* and *Hankyoreh* across the three measured time periods.

* The percentage of stories where the second, most attributed news sources is a government official or physician was mostly high in both newspapers across the three measured time periods.

* The percentage of stories where the second source represents groups other than government officials and physicians was mostly low in both newspapers.

* The frequency of stories where the second source represents groups other than government officials and physicians was mostly low and consistent in both newspapers.

* The frequency of stories where there is an educational context, history, discussion of policy issues and analyses how to resolve issues was mostly low and consistent in both newspapers.

* The percentage of stories where the primary topic is framed on topics other than a reaction or response to breaking events or reprinting information provided by government and non-government officials is mostly low in both newspapers.

* The frequency of stories where the story's primary topic is framed on topics other than a reaction or response to breaking events or reprinting information provided by government and non-government officials is mostly low and consistent in both newspapers.

Two hypotheses received equivocal support.

* The frequency of social actors other than governmental officials and physicians as primary news sources was somewhat low and consistent in *Chosun Ilbo* and *Hankyoreh* across the three measured time periods.

* The frequency of stories where the primary topic is the reaction or response to breaking events or reprinting information provided by government and non-government officials was somewhat high and consistent in both newspapers.

One hypothesis was partially rejected.

* The percentage of stories where the primary topic is the reaction or response to breaking events or reprinting information provided by government and non-government officials was not high (varied between moderate and high) in both newspapers.

One of the study's 13 hypotheses was rejected.

* The frequency of stories where the second, most attributed source was a government official or a physician was mostly moderate (not high) in *Chosun Ilbo* and *Hankyoreh* and was consistent across all three measured time periods.

Of the hypotheses derived from the Korean-based literature, Tables 1 and 2 combined report a high percentage of physicians were primary and secondary news sources in

Chosun Ilbo and *Hankyoreh* in all three measured time periods. A high to moderate percentage of government officials were primary and secondary sources in *Chosun Ilbo* and *Hankyoreh* in all three measured time periods. Both newspapers also devoted a high percentage and frequency of news stories based on reactions as a primary news peg or framework in their reporting throughout the period surveyed.

Of the hypotheses more derived from the Korean and U.S.-based literature, both *Chosun Ilbo* and *Hankyoreh* rarely embedded an educational context, history, discussion of policy issues and analyses how to resolve issues within routine news reporting. *Chosun Ilbo* embedded perspectives in n=31/256 and *Hankyoreh* embedded perspectives in 15/431 stories during the three measured time periods. In addition, the frequency of all stories framed around interpretive reporting was 31/256 in *Chosun Ilbo* and 15/431 in *Hankyoreh*. Although coincidentally identical, the two findings represented separate variables.

It is additionally important to note that there was no discussion of legal, ethical, and sociological dimensions in any of the stories *Chosun Ilbo* or *Hankyoreh* published during the entire national, public health crisis. Similarly, no published story framed, or embedded, policy or other issues from a patient's perspective.

The aggregate findings, that is, suggest a tendency to: overemphasize official sources, underemphasize other news sources and avoid extensive in-depth reporting. These findings are similar to qualitative assertions within the Korean and U.S. - based literature regarding public health news reporting.

On the other hand, the findings suggest both newspapers occasionally consulted a range of sources besides physicians and government officials. Both *Chosun Ilbo* and *Hankyoreh* published stories where the primary news source included, civic groups, pharmacists, patients, the opposition party, medical school faculty, congressional officials and even citizens. Both *Chosun Ilbo* and *Hankyoreh* published stories where the second, most attributed, news source reflected a similar array of sources. While news frameworks based on reactions were ubiquitous, the stories grounded in actual reprinting of non-governmental and governmental information were less than hypothesized. In addition, both *Chosun Ilbo* and *Hankyoreh* provided a modest range of stories where the primary focus was interpretive reporting, human interest, future prospects, background information, event-based coverage and government rationales. Within the news stories that included analyses and interpretation, there was occasional reporting about medical policy, economics, history, comparative analyses, politics and issue resolution.

The exceptions suggest both *Chosun Ilbo* and *Hankyoreh* were partially attentive to a diversity of news sources, news topics and news approaches. The aggregate findings, over time, suggest an effort to report Korean's public health crisis from different angles and consult sources, as events warranted. For example, both *Chosun Ilbo's* and *Hankyoreh's* interest in interviewing medical students are primary sources increased during the third period as the student strike became a pressing national issue.

In summary, the overall findings demonstrate there are tendencies in coverage in both newspapers, however, both news organizations displayed a flexibility to break reportorial and news selection patterns as events unfolded.

As a result, it is unwise to conclude both newspapers provided insufficient coverage, or lacked multi-dimensional approaches to covering Korea's public health crisis. To put this another way, the study does not suggest the reporting of the public health crisis in both newspapers was insufficiently multi-dimensional to empower Korean citizens to make health policy decisions. The findings demonstrate a limited reportorial and news selection range at times: but also suggest *Chosun Ilbo* and *Hankyoreh* made efforts to diversify their coverage of Korea's public health crisis.

In addition, the study suggests the extent of the detail that content analysis, as a research technique, reveals about reportorial and news selection patterns over time. The study challenges normative assertions about news performance that are occasionally suggested within case study approaches and suggests actual reporting and news selection patterns in a national health crisis reflect more subtle journalistic attention to provide a range of sources and perspective than some previous research suggests.

The study's limitations include: the prevailing impressions of social actors depicted in *Chosun Ilbo* and *Hankyoreh* are not reported. This would add another dimension to assessing overall reporting patterns.The authors plan to report these data in a subsequent paper. The researchers assessed only two of Korea's several national daily newspapers. While the results reflect the two newspapers surveyed, the findings are not generalizeable to other Korean newspapers or news organizations. In addition, content analysis demands a degree of discretion by coders to make judgments regarding news coverage.

For future research, the study suggests there are advantages in using a universe of news articles published within a finite time period. The authors believe the partially contrasting patterns summarized above might not have been revealed by either a random sampling of news coverage or by a case study, qualitative approach. The study also suggests some subtle, but important advantages, in measuring both percentages and frequencies. Assuming a universe of items are sampled, percentages provide precise measures of a newspaper's performance within each assessed time period. The frequencies provide occasionally precise measurements of a newspaper's performance across the three measured time periods.

In conclusion, the study reinforces some inconsistencies between qualitative criticisms of the news media's reporting and news selection tendencies and their actual performance, which has been pointed out recently by Friedman et al. (1996), Pellechia (1997) and Logan, Peng and Wilson (2000a, 2000b). The criticisms derived from individual case studies do not always reflect broader science and health writing, reporting, and news selection trends. The study also reinforces the value of content analysis to raise new questions and challenge qualitative assertions, and underscores the value of an international setting for comparative research on how the news media cover public health.

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Table 1. Frequency and Percentage of the Primary News Source by Time

News Source	**Paper**	**Sep 99 –** Jun 20, 00	**Jun 21, 00** – Jul 00	**Aug 00** – Dec 00	χ^2	**sig.**
Physician	*Chosun Ilbo*	38 (40.4%)	35 (44.3%)	20 (24.1%)	5.236	.073
	Hankyoreh	36 (38.7%)	50 (31.4%)	39 (21.8%)	6.562	.038*
Government	*Chosun Ilbo*	40 (42.6%)	17 (21.5%)	24 (28.9%)	6.291	.043*
	Hankyoreh	31 (33.3%)	45 (28.3%)	54 (30.2%)	.492	.782
Civic Group	*Chosun Ilbo*	3 (3.2%)	6 (7.6%)	10 (12.0%)	4.663	.097
	Hankyoreh	10 (10.8%)	12 (7.5%)	16 (8.9%)	.689	.709
Pharmacist	*Chosun Ilbo*	7 (7.4%)	3 (3.8%)	2 (2.4%)	2.579	.275
	Hankyoreh	5 (5.4%)	10 (6.3%)	7 (3.9%)	.951	.622
Medical School Student	*Chosun Ilbo*	2 (2.1%)	3 (3.8%)	9 (10.8%)	6.706	.035*
	Hankyoreh	----------	1 (.6%)	14 (7.8%)	-----	-----
Patient	*Chosun Ilbo*	----------	----------	6 (7.2%)	-----	-----
	Hankyoreh	3 (3.2%)	7 (4.4%)	9 (5.0%)	.451	.798
Incumbent Party	*Chosun Ilbo*	----------	2 (2.5%)	4 (4.8%)	-----	-----
	Hankyoreh	2 (2.2%)	6 (3.8%)	6 (3.4%)	.486	.784
Others[a]	*Chosun Ilbo*	1 (1.1%)	3 (3.8%)	3 (3.6%)	1.521	.467
	Hankyoreh	2 (2.2%)	4 (2.5%)	7 (3.9%)	.838	.658
Multiple	*Chosun Ilbo*	----------	----------	----------	-----	-----
	Hankyoreh	3 (3.2%)	6 (3.8%)	10 (5.6%)	1.004	.605
Medical School Faculty	*Chosun Ilbo*	1 (1.1%)	2 (2.5%)	2 (2.4%)	.605	.739
	Hankyoreh	----------	4 (2.5%)	8 (4.5%)	-----	-----
Congress	*Chosun Ilbo*	1 (1.1%)	2 (2.5%)	----------	-----	-----
	Hankyoreh	----------	11 (6.9%)	----------	-----	-----
Opposition Party	*Chosun Ilbo*	1 (1.1%)	3 (3.8%)	2 (2.4%)	1.371	.504
	Hankyoreh	----------	3 (1.9%)	3 (1.7%)	-----	-----
General Public	*Chosun Ilbo*	----------	2 (2.5%)	----------	-----	-----
	Hankyoreh	1 (1.1%)	----------	4 (2.2%)	-----	-----
Pharmaceutical Company	*Chosun Ilbo*	----------	1 (1.3%)	1 (1.2%)	-----	-----
	Hankyoreh	----------	----------	2 (1.1%)	-----	-----
Total	*Chosun Ilbo*	94 (100.0%)	79(100.0%)	83(100.0%)		
	Hankyoreh	93 (100.0%)	159(100.0%)	179(100.0%)		

*<.05

[a] "Others" include medical socialists, the public corporation of medical insurance, Health and Medicare Labor Union, non-source, etc. Correlation of reliability formula is reported

in Holsti (1960, p. 140). The formula used in this study was as follows: average of reliability=C1,...., C2/2, where C is the correlation of reliability scores. Two coders were used.

Table 2. Frequency and Percentage of the Second, Most Attributed, News Source by Time

News Source (Total Freq./%)	**Paper**	**Sep 99 –** Jun 20, 00	**Jun 21, 00** – Jul 00	**Aug 00** – Dec 00	χ_	**sig.**
Physician	*Chosun Ilbo*	11 (22.0%)	10 (23.3%)	16 (29.6%)	.689	.709
	Hankyoreh	11 (22.0%)	23 (24.2%)	38 (36.2%)	3.489	.175
Government	*Chosun Ilbo*	15 (30.0%)	10 (23.3%)	9 (16.7%)	1.996	.369
	Hankyoreh	15 (30.0%)	19 (20.0%)	18 (17.7%)	2.739	.254
Pharmacist	*Chosun Ilbo*	4 (8.0%)	7 (16.3%)	6 (11.1%)	1.385	.500
	Hankyoreh	1 (2.0%)	10 (10.5%)	6 (5.7%)	3.816	.148
Medical School Student	*Chosun Ilbo*	----------	2 (4.7%)	7 (13.0%)	-----	-----
	Hankyoreh	1 (2.0%)	7 (7.4%)	15 (14.3%)	6.116	.047*
Multiple	*Chosun Ilbo*	6 (12.0%)	1 (2.3%)	1 (1.9%)	5.998	.050*
	Hankyoreh	11 (22.0%)	7 (7.4%)	5 (4.8%)	11.499	.003**
Civic Group	*Chosun Ilbo*	4 (8.0%)	2 (4.7%)	4 (7.4%)	.427	.808
	Hankyoreh	6 (12.0%)	6 (6.3%)	6 (5.7%)	2.025	.363
Patient	*Chosun Ilbo*	7 (14.0%)	4 (9.3%)	2 (3.7%)	3.127	.209
	Hankyoreh	1 (2.0%)	4 (4.2%)	3 (2.9%)	1.750	.417
Opposition Party	*Chosun Ilbo*	----------	1 (2.3%)	1 (1.9%)	-----	-----
	Hankyoreh	1 (2.0%)	9 (9.5%)	2 (1.9%)	6.973	.031*
Medical School Faculty	*Chosun Ilbo*	----------	1 (2.3%)	----------	-----	-----
	Hankyoreh	3 (6.0%)	2 (2.1%)	5 (4.8%)	1.505	.471
Incumbent Party	*Chosun Ilbo*	----------	3 (7.0%)	3 (5.6%)	-----	-----
	Hankyoreh	----------	3 (3.2%)	2 (1.9%)	-----	-----
General Public	*Chosun Ilbo*	1 (2.0%)	2 (4.7%)	2 (3.7%)	.501	.779
	Hankyoreh	----------	----------	3 (2.9%)	-----	-----
Others[a]	*Chosun Ilbo*	2 (4.0%)	----------	1 (1.9%)	-----	-----
	Hankyoreh	----------	3 (3.2%)	2 (1.9%)	-----	-----
Pharmaceutical Company	*Chosun Ilbo*	----------	----------	2 (3.7%)	-----	-----
	Hankyoreh	----------	1 (1.1%)	----------	-----	-----
Congress	*Chosun Ilbo*	----------	----------	----------	-----	-----
	Hankyoreh	----------	1 (1.1%)	----------	-----	-----
Total	*Chosun Ilbo*	50 (100.0%)	43 (100.0%)	54(100.0%)		
	Hankyoreh	50 (100.0%)	95 (100.0%)	105(100.0%)		

*<.05, **<.01

[a] "Others" include medical socialists, the public corporation of medical insurance, Health and Medicare Labor Union, non-source, etc.

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Table 3. Percentage of News Pegs, Primary Topics, or Framework by Time

Framework	**Paper**	**Sep 99 –** Jun 20, 00	**Jun 21, 00** – Jul 00	**Aug 00** – Dec 00	χ_	**sig.**
Reactions	*Chosun Ilbo*	39 (41.5%)	32 (40.5%)	31 (37.3%)	.202	.904
	Hankyoreh	40 (43.0%)	77 (48.4%)	82 (45.8%)	.382	.826
Reprinting	*Chosun Ilbo*	9 (9.6%)	10 (12.7%)	8 (9.6%)	.483	.785
Non-government Information	*Hankyoreh*	16 (17.2%)	28 (17.6%)	33 (18.4%)	.061	.970
Reprinting	*Chosun Ilbo*	20 (21.3%)	10 (12.7%)	9 (10.8%)	3.647	.161
Government Information	*Hankyoreh*	15 (16.1%)	20 (12.6%)	25 (14.0%)	.532	.767
Interpretive	*Chosun Ilbo*	10 (10.6%)	11 (13.9%)	10 (12.0%)	.383	.826
Reporting	*Hankyoreh*	9 (9.7%)	1 (.6%)	5 (2.8%)	14.220	.001***
Background	*Chosun Ilbo*	5 (5.3%)	3 (3.8%)	3 (3.6%)	.364	.833
Information	*Hankyoreh*	2 (2.2%)	13 (8.2%)	10 (5.6%)	3.697	.157
Non-reaction	*Chosun Ilbo*	1 (1.1%)	3 (3.8%)	9 (10.8%)	8.671	.013*
Event Reporting	*Hankyoreh*	3 (3.2%)	13 (8.2%)	6 (3.4%)	4.659	.097
Human Interest	*Chosun Ilbo*	5 (5.3%)	5 (6.3%)	7 (8.4%)	.661	.719
Framing	*Hankyoreh*	3 (3.2%)	2 (1.3%)	10 (5.6%)	4.556	.103
Others[a]	*Chosun Ilbo*	2 (2.1%)	1 (1.3%)	4 (4.8%)	2.069	.355
	Hankyoreh	5 (5.4%)	1 (.6%)	----------	-----	-----
Government	*Chosun Ilbo*	----------	----------	1 (1.2%)	-----	-----
Rationale	*Hankyoreh*	----------	3 (1.9%)	7 (3.9%)	-----	-----
Future Prospects	*Chosun Ilbo*	3 (3.2%)	4 (5.1%)	1 (1.2%)	1.930	.381
	Hankyoreh	----------	1 (.6%)	1 (.6%)	-----	-----
Total		*Chosun Ilbo*	94(100.0%)	79(100.0%)	83(100.0%)	
	Hankyoreh	93 (100.0%)	159(100.0%)	179(100.0%)		

*<.05, ***<.001

[a] "Others" include stories of opinion poll study, features about the president of an association, etc.

Table 4. Percentage of Analysis or Perspective Embedded in News Stories by Time

Perspective	**Paper**	**Sep 99 –** Jun 20, 00	**Jun 21, 00** – Jul 00	**Aug 00** – Dec 00
Medical Policy	*Chosun Ilbo*	4 (40.0%)	5 (45.5%)	3 (30.0%)
	Hankyoreh	2 (22.2%)	1 (100.0%)	3 (60.0%)
Economics	*Chosun Ilbo*	4 (40.0%)	----------	5 (50.0%)
	Hankyoreh	3 (33.3%)	----------	----------
History	*Chosun Ilbo*	2 (20.0%)	2 (18.2%)	----------
	Hankyoreh	2 (22.2%)	----------	----------
Issue Resolution Perspective	*Chosun Ilbo*	----------	2 (18.2%)	----------
	Hankyoreh	1 (11.1%)	----------	1 (20.0%)
Comparative Analysis Perspective	*Chosun Ilbo*	----------	2 (18.2%)	----------
	Hankyoreh	1 (11.1%)	----------	1 (20.0%)
Political Perspective	*Chosun Ilbo*	----------	----------	2 (20.0%)
	Hankyoreh	----------	----------	----------
Total	*Chosun Ilbo*	10 (100.0%)	11 (100.0%)	10 (100.0%)
	Hankyoreh	9 (100.0%)	1 (100.0%)	5 (100.0%)

Numbers in the News: A Mathematics Audit of a Daily Newspaper

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Abstract

To establish baseline information about journalistic use and misuse of numbers, 1,500 local news stories were examined in a mathematics audit of a daily metropolitan newspaper. Nearly half of local stories were found to involve mathematical calculation. Eleven categories of numerical inaccuracy were identified. Most errors were self-evident and involved elementary mathematics. Results suggest that journalists fail to apply the attention and skepticism to numbers that they routinely apply to other aspects of their work.

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Numbers in the News:
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Numbers have become as essential as words for journalists to explain what is happening in our world. Virtually every aspect of modern life – from the quality of the air we breathe to the safety of the cars we drive – is measured and influenced by statistics. The decisions on how to interpret and react to the data are too important to be left solely to the scientists and the politicians. And if the media do not have the ability to sort through the conflicting, confusing morass of numbers, who will? Considering numeracy one of ten essential competencies for journalists, the Poynter Institute for Media Studies (1998) declares, "Simply put, journalists need math skills to make sense of numbers the way they need language skills to make sense of words" (p. 7).

But the mathematical incompetence of journalists is practically legendary. Mathematical errors and abuses in the media are considered so pervasive that news consumers are advised to be ever vigilant. "Watch out for the numbers," warns *USA Today* magazine in an article titled "Today's Journalism is Riddled with Errors" (Doherty 1995, p. 69). Columnist James J. Kilpatrick, who for years has collected examples of math errors by the news media, ruefully concludes that many journalists cannot handle even grade-school math. Kilpatrick (1999) states, "People who write for a living should never be left alone with mathematics. They are almost bound to mess up" (p. 5G).

Despite the widespread perception that the news profession deals poorly with numbers yet increasingly needs to use them effectively, little is really known about numeracy in the newsroom. It is well documented that mathematical errors commonly appear in the newspaper and on television news (e.g., Charnley 1936; Brown 1965; Berry 1967; Galdieri 1999), but identification of the types of math mistakes made by journalists has received little study. Also lacking is empirical examination of the extent that journalists today rely on numbers and math to cover the news. To establish baseline information about the use and misuse of numbers by a daily newspaper, approximately 1,500 local news stories were examined in a mathematics audit of *The News & Observer*. This systematic inspection provides a gauge of mathematics usage in daily news reporting and a baseline inventory of the kinds of mathematical errors found in the press.

Literature Review

In a seminal accuracy study more than a half century ago, Mitchell Charnley (1936) of the University of Minnesota found that three Minneapolis daily newspapers repeatedly got their numbers wrong. Mathematical and numerical errors have been detected in a long line of accuracy surveys that followed Charnley's path-setting efforts (e.g., Brown 1965; Berry 1967; Tillinghast 1982). In more recent years, journalistic innumeracy[1] has been found to contribute to inaccurate and misleading stories regarding political polls (Frankel 1996), banking (Levinson 1992), the homeless (Hewitt 1996), African-Americans (Gilens 1996), the poor (Gilens 1996), child abuse (Nieman Reports 1993), Social Security and Medicare (Wildavsky 1997), drug abuse (Orcutt and Turner 1993), sports (MacNeal 1997), technological and natural disaster (Singer and Endreny 1993), and other topical issues. After reviewing more than 100 news stories on coverage of educational issues, investigators lamented the media's "appalling lack of understanding of statistics and social science research" (Berliner and Binder 1998). The inability of the media to sort through contradictory and ambiguous statistics has been found to perpetuate public misunderstanding of a broad range of social issues, from gauging the livability of cities to understanding the prospects of late-life marriage (Maier 1999).

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[1] Innumeracy is defined as "an inability to deal comfortably with the fundamental notions of numbers and chance" (Paulos 1988).

Several authors suggest that reportorial misuse of numbers is not just a matter of accident or ignorance. For example, Huff (1954) notes that misleading graphical representations in newspapers and magazines frequently sensationalize by exaggeration yet rarely minimize: "As long as the errors remain one-sided, it is not easy to attribute them to bungling or accident" (p. 101). Philip Meyer (1979) and Victor Cohn (1989) also contend the professional bias toward making headline news leads to distorted representation of data. Research provides empirical evidence that newspapers and television selectively use quantitative data to highlight worsening trends in the news while minimizing trends that depict improving social conditions (Berger 1997; 1998; 2000).

While the need for statistical skills in news reporting has long been recognized (e.g., White and Levine 1954), the notion that journalists should conduct their own statistical analyses did not take hold until the computer age. Meyer in his ground-breaking *Precision Journalism* (1973; 1979) and subsequent *The New Precision Journalism* (1991) urges journalists to apply statistical analysis and other social science techniques to reporting. Says Meyer (1973), "We can save ourselves some trouble, some inaccuracy, and some lost opportunities by merely paying attention to what the social scientists are doing and finding out. More importantly and of more direct practical value, we can follow their example by abandoning the philosopher's armchair, giving up the notion that a few facts and common sense will make any problem yield, and make the new, high-powered research techniques our own" (p. 13).

Cohn (1989) also advocates the use of scientific method in his practical guide to reporting on statistical claims in health and science. Other authors make the case generally for data analysis in news reporting (e.g., Garrison 1995; DeFleur 1997), and in journalism education (DeFleur and Davenport 1993; Denham 1997; Williams 1997), or offer instruction on how to practice computer-assisted journalism (Demers and Nichols 1987; Garrison 1995; Houston 1996; Miller 1998). Researchers also have documented the need for skillful display of numbers as newspapers increasingly rely on informational graphics to convey quantitative information (Prabu 1992; Ward 1992; Orcutt and Turner 1993). As former *Washington Post* reporter Victor Cohn notes in his authoritative guide *News & Numbers* (1989b), "We journalists like to think we deal mainly in facts and ideas, but much of what we report is based on numbers. Politics comes down to votes. Budgets and dollars dominate government. The economy, business, employment, sports – all demand numbers. . . . Like it or not, we must wade in" (pp. 3-4).

The broadest treatment of journalistic use and misuse of numbers is provided by John Allen Paulos in *A Mathematician Reads the Newspaper* (1996). Offering a philosophical look at mathematical foibles in the media, Paulos argues that the most serious shortcoming of journalistic use of numbers is neither statistical ignorance nor blunder but a lack of appreciation of how mathematics can be used to sharpen and broaden the view of the world. "It's time to let the secret out," Paulos says. "Mathematics is not primarily a matter of plugging numbers into formulas and performing rote computations. It is a way of thinking and questioning that may be unfamiliar to us" (p. 3). But the pay-off is worth it, Paulos contends:

> '[N]umbers stories' complement, deepen, and regularly undermine 'people stories.' Probability considerations can enhance articles on crime, health risks, or racial and ethnic bias. . . . And mathematically pertinent notions from philosophy and psychology provide perspective on a variety of public issues. All these ideas give us a revealing, albeit oblique, slant on the traditional Who, What, When, Why and How of the journalist's craft. (pp. 3-4)

Research Questions

A long line of newspaper accuracy studies has identified incorrect numbers as a major type of error, but there has been little systematic investigation of the kinds of mathematical errors that creep into newspaper stories. To address this gap in the literature, this case study of *The News & Observer* seeks to identify *prima facie* mathematical errors in the newspaper – mistakes in calculation, usage, or interpretation of numbers that are self-evident to a careful reader. Also examined empirically is how often mathematics is used in local news coverage. Two research questions are posed:

(1) What types of mathematical errors occur in local news coverage by *The News & Observer*?

(2) How frequently do local news stories in *The News & Observer* involve numerical calculation?

Method

The final edition of *The News & Observer*, a daily metropolitan newspaper based in Raleigh, North Carolina, was examined for mathematical errors over a three-month period, September 7 through December 6, 1998. The review period was chosen to provide a representative sample of local news articles during a time of year in which neither staffing nor story selection would be distorted by summer or holiday scheduling. This review period turned out to be a period in which national news (largely outside the scope of this examination) focused on allegations of President Clinton's affair with Monica Lewinksy, but local news was not influenced by any extraordinary news events (i.e., hurricanes, police shootings, civil disorder). The final edition of *The News & Observer*, delivered to most Raleigh-area subscribers, was chosen for inspection because it offered the largest circulation and was considered by newspaper management to best represent the daily newspaper.

The inspection included all local bylined articles (including accompanying sidebars and graphic illustrations) appearing in the "A" section, Metro ("North Carolina" on Sundays), and Business ("Work & Money" on Sundays) sections of the newspaper. Stories not authored by *News & Observer* staff (primarily wire stories) were considered outside the scope of this investigation because the newspaper has limited control over their accuracy and use of numbers. News briefs and standing columns, which tend to have few numbers, also were excluded from the sample.

The definition of mathematical error and misinterpretation of numbers was open-ended. The literature offers considerable latitude in what defines newspaper error in general, and it is essentially silent on what constitutes mathematical error. One purpose of the research was to help identify the scope of the problems that newspapers have with math and numbers in the news. The best way to achieve this goal was to approach the examination of news stories without a narrowly prescribed definition of mathematical error. However, the review was influenced by others who have examined numeracy in the news. For example, this researcher was mindful of the "semi-attached figure" (numbers presented without context), "meaningless precision" (unfounded decimal-point accuracy), and other examples of errant reporting identified by Darrell Huff (1954), John Allen Paulos (1988; 1996), and others who have examined math errors in the news. Following Mitchell Charnley's (1936) classic model of accuracy research, the examination included errors of interpretation (i.e., use of numbers that were technically correct but misleading), as well as errors of fact (i.e., miscalculated percentage change). It also drew on Charles Berger's (1997; 1998; 2000) research suggesting that newspapers' selective use of figures (i.e., using frequency data rather than rate data) makes a "scary world" appear worse than it is. In addition, this study seeks to identify issues of numerical style -- examples of numbers presented in a manner that is redundant, vague or otherwise lacking clarity and precision.

Whenever an error was found, the offending article was filed along with a summary statement of the mistake in calculation or interpretation. As a check against inaccuracy in this accuracy review, a senior journalism faculty member at a major research university reviewed the selected news items. Only when both researchers agreed that an error occurred were data used in this analysis (the raw rate of coder agreement was 91.5 percent.). From this inventory of *prima facie* mathematical mistakes, errors were categorized by placement (i.e., page one, business section) and by type (i.e., misuse of terminology, meaningless precision). Since the purpose of this research was to identify types of mathematical errors, no attempt was made to quantify frequency of errors. Errors that were substantively identical were categorized as a single type of mathematical error. For example, incorrect mathematical application of the term "margin" was recorded as a single error type under the broader classification of misuse of mathematical terminology, even though the term was misused repeatedly in reporting election results.

In a separate content review, *The News & Observer* was examined to gauge how often math is required in daily news reporting. This follows from a pilot investigation in which two-thirds of the local news stories carried in *The News & Observer* were found to involve some sort of mathematical calculation or numerical point of comparison. The preliminary finding, if substantiated, would support anecdotal claims that numbers have become an inescapable part of reporting. To further test this premise, the newspaper was systematically examined over a subsequent 30-day period, February 16 through March 16, 2000, to identify local news and business stories that involve quantitative skills. Operationally defined, a news story was considered to involve quantitative skills if the story explicitly or implicitly includes either mathematical calculation (i.e., average housing prices or inflation rate) or a mathematical point of comparison (i.e., change in government expenditures or differences in school test scores). Under this definition, simple numerical representations such as ages, prices, and dates were not considered to require math skills.

Results

During the three-month review, approximately 1,500 local news stories were examined for numerical accuracy. The inspection yielded 43 examples of *prima facie* mathematical errors and misinterpretation of numbers. The 43 examples provide an inventory of the types of mathematical errors made by journalists at the newspaper, and, as such, the examples represent neither the total nor the frequency of the errors identified. None of the news sections of the newspaper was found to be error-prone – or free of mathematical error. Despite the editorial scrutiny given the front page, 42 percent of the error types were found in news stories appearing in the "A" section of the newspaper. More than a third of the A-section errors identified involved news stories that led on the front page. Mathematical errors identified in the Metro section, 39.6 percent of the total, accounted for nearly as many errors as found in the "A" section. The business section accounted for only 18.6 percent of the error types identified, even though the majority of business stories conveyed numerical information. Nearly a quarter of all error types involved misuse of numerical information conveyed in sidebar graphics. Charts and graphs with numerical errors were found in nearly identical proportion in the front, metro and business sections of the newspaper.

The errors were classified in eleven categories of numerical inaccuracy. The error categories are listed in Table 1 and discussed in further detail in the following section. Examples of errors are given for illustrative purposes and do not represent all errors identified.

Table 1. Categories/Examples of mathematical errors and misinterpretation of numbers

Category
Examples

- (1) ***Numbers do not tally***
  - Arithmetic error leads to overstated sales-growth claim
  - Survey tabulation falls short due to changing metric
  - Graphic confuses one third fewer with one-third as many
  - Inconsistent rounding results in inconsistent figures
- (2) ***Misinterpretation of numbers***
  - GRE score of 1600 misreported as "perfect" performance
  - Numbers conflict with story claim that debit card usage is the "norm"
  - Poll results overstated by omitting undecided voters from base of calculation
- (3) ***Misuse of mathematical terminology***
  - The term "margin" repeatedly misused in reporting election results
  - Margin confused with ratio
  - Redundant use of term "cost" to describe average apartment rent
- (4) ***Inappropriate baseline***
  - Missing or misleading starting point used to depict sales growth
  - Inconsistent baseline used in graphic comparing stock performances
- *(5)* ***Missing breakline (//)***
  - School enrollment decline exaggerated in graphic using abbreviated scale
  - Tobacco sales decline exaggerated in graphic using abbreviated scale
- *(6)* ***Story-chart inconsistency***
  - Sales-growth percentages cited in story differ from chart
  - Story uses different time frame than chart to show boom in hotel construction
- *(7)* ***Needless numbers***
  - Mirror percentages reported in two-person elections
  - Needless calculation of revenue difference between a one- and two-cent tax
- *(8)* ***Meaningless precision***
  - Company's 8-digit tax bills reported to the penny
  - Needless precision and imprecise rounding muddle food stamp figures
- *(9)* ***Numbers sensationalized***
  - Headline and story overplay jury award for punitive damages
  - Day-care center costs overstated
- ***(10) Unquestioning use of numbers***
  - Implausible economic toll from freeway closure cited without question
  - Claimed benefits from merger of two travel companies lack skepticism
  - Unlikely estimates of Christmas parade crowds unquestioned
  - Marketer's division turns cotton candy into a low-calorie snack
- ***(11) Naked numbers***
  - Story cites difficulty of evaluating HMO statistics, yet guidance missing
  - The equation, but not the results, given for predicting cigarette consumption
  - Human dimension missing from story showing strong economic gains for blacks

Error Categories

Numbers do not tally. Among the most common mathematical mistakes were stories with numerical assertions that did not tally with the numbers given. For example, a *News & Observer* business story cited a company prediction that digital camera sales will quadruple to 12 million units in 2001, up from 3.8 million (October 9, 1998, D-1). Either the reporter muffed the calculation or unquestioningly accepted the company's figures: the predicted growth would barely triple digital camera sales. *The News & Observer* also fell short in reporting its own pre-election poll when the newspaper said that "four in ten people" oppose a zoning ballot measure, "three in ten support it," and "22 percent were undecided or declined to respond" (December 5, 1998, B-1). Changing the metric mid-sentence was not only confusing but left unaccounted 8 percent of the voters surveyed. An otherwise strong series about urban growth did a tailspin when a caption to a front-page graphic asserted that high-occupancy vehicle (HOV) lanes carry one-third fewer cars than the highway's regular lanes (October 25, 1998). According to the numbers cited in the chart, HOV lanes actually carry *two-thirds* fewer cars. The artist apparently confused one-third fewer with one-third as many.

Inattention to rounding also resulted in numerical errors. In an election story, the reported results of a local judge's race exceeded 100 percent (October 4, 1998, B-1). Inconsistent rounding apparently also led a reporter to refer to a 40 percent cut in funding of domestic violence programs, but, in the same paragraph, contends each of the 76 programs will be reduced 39 percent (September 24, 1998, A-3).

Misinterpretation of numbers. Misstated in a headline, in the story and in a subsequent correction was an assertion that local students posting a 1600 on the

Scholastic Assessment Test had achieved a "perfect" score. In fact, 1600 is a standardized score representing three standard deviations or more above the mean – a laudable but not necessarily error-free achievement. In a business article about the rising popularity of debit cards, usage was overstated when the headline indicated that the cards are the "preferred form of plastic" and the story suggests that they represent the "norm" in paperless transactions. As the story itself noted, less than half of American families have debit cards, and many Americans who have debit cards do not use them. In a front-page story, the lead paragraph overstates the results of a *News & Observer* poll by asserting that a referendum to reduce the size of the Durham City Council is supported by "more than a 3-to-1 margin" (December 4, 1998, A-1). Three-to-one is a ratio, not a margin. More importantly, the poll actually found that 52 percent of voters supported the reduction, 16 percent opposed it, and the remainder were undecided or refused to answer. Supporters, indeed, outnumbered declared opponents more than three to one. But the lead paragraph implied that voters are overwhelmingly in favor of the measure when, in fact, only a slim majority supported it.

Misuse of mathematical terminology. Some stories got the numbers right but misused basic mathematical terms. For example, the term margin was not only an overused political cliché in election stories but its usage was repeatedly incorrect.[2] In a front-page story, the newspaper reported that political newcomer John Edwards led incumbent U.S. Sen. Lauch Faircloth "by a margin of 51 percent to 47 percent." The margin – the difference – is 4 percent. As noted previously, margin also was confused with the term ratio. Sometimes, journalists stumbled on mathematical terms they probably have no trouble using correctly in everyday life. For example, a chart illustrating rising housing prices referred in the caption to "the average cost of apartment rents." Cost is implicit; the redundancy can be avoided by simply stating, "apartment rents average... ."

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[2] As defined by Webster's Third International Dictionary of the English Language (unabridged), margin is the "measure or degree of difference; *esp*: one by which a decision is made <the vote was 54 to 34, a ~ of twenty>" (Springfield, MA: G & C Merrian, 1981, 1381).

Inappropriate baseline. Reporters and graphic artists erred by using an inappropriate baseline when depicting growth patterns. For example, a business reporter asserted that retail sales at a local Sears department store had tripled since its 1990 opening (October 6, 1998, D-4). Tripled from a starting point of zero? The assertion lacked an appropriate benchmark. In another business story, a bar chart was used to graphically show an eight-fold increase of customers of an up-and-coming health maintenance organization (September 10, 1998, D-1). While factually correct, the depiction of exponential growth was misleading since the starting point was when the young company, less than two years old, began with relatively few customers. Another problem with baselines occurred when a chart comparing year-to-date percentage stock growth did not start at zero (September 23, 1998, D-1). According to the reported stock indices, the S&P 500 entered 1998 with a deficit, while super-charged Duke Energy began the year with instant growth. This depiction does not provide a level playing field, and, in fact, presents a statistical impossibility.

Missing breakline. Consistently absent in charts was the use of a breakline (//) when the numerical baseline did not begin at zero. For example, a line graph showing Durham public school enrollment had dipped to 29,081 students began on the y axis at

25,000 (September 12, 1998, B-1). The result was that the enrollment decline appeared steeper than if a full perspective had been provided. In another example, a graph exhibiting a decline in tobacco quotas started the scale at 500 million pounds (September 23, 1998, A-1). Again, the depiction exaggerated the appearance of decline. Moreover, the y axis incorrectly referred to millions of pounds, when the scale was actually set at billions of pounds. At the very least, breaklines should have been included to put readers on notice that the graphical representations used compressed scales.

Story-chart inconsistency. Another persistent problem with charts was inconsistency between the numbers depicted in a graphic illustration and the accompanying news story. For example, a story on the region's booming economy asserts that Wake County's retail sales are up 6.7 percent, but the chart indicates growth is nearly 25 percent (November 7, 1998, A-1). Discerning readers would wonder which figure is correct -- if they have not dismissed entirely the credibility of an otherwise informative article. In another example, a story about a hotel construction boom refers to 38 percent growth over three years while the chart depicts 40 percent growth over four years (September 23, 1998, B-12). Making matters even more confusing, the underlying numbers used in the story suggest the actual three-year growth rate is nearly 39 percent.

Needless numbers. Sometimes reporters went overboard with numbers, failing to be as parsimonious with figures as they have learned to be with words. For example, many election stories cited both winning and losing percentages of a two-person race, a redundancy much like saying a glass is two-thirds full *and* one-third empty. "Price defeated perennial candidate Ralph McKinney 87 percent to 13 percent," noted a page-one story (September 17, 1998, A-1) while another front-page story reported "Manning had 59 percent of the vote; Watson had 41 percent" (September 17, 1998, A-1). It would be clearer to state that Price won resoundingly with 87 percent of the vote, or Manning, with 59 percent of the vote, led Watson.

And, occasionally, journalists appear to underestimate the reader's mathematical intelligence. A Metro story reported, "A penny charge per gallon of gas could generate up to $30 million in revenue. Two cents could bring up to $60 million." (September 9, 1998, B-1). Another Metro story noted that a "town's 7,300 population will double to 14,600 in the next ten years." It is mathematically redundant and unnecessarily cluttered to perform such simple calculations for the readers.

Meaningless precision. Journalists sometimes took numerical precision to pointless extremes. In a story about cash-strapped International Heritage Inc., a business reporter specified a list of large tax bills down to the penny owed: $653,931.64 in sales and use taxes, $163,482.92 in penalties, and $104,343.60 in interest (September 23, 1998, D-1). The 8-digit detail was not only confusing but makes the reporting appear petty. In a page-one story about food stamps, the newspaper mixed round figures with excessive precision when it reported that "$4 million in food stamps [were issued] in July, an average of about $160.15 for the 25,499 food stamp households" (September 7, 1998, A-1). The result was a muddle of figures that were neither clear nor precise. The average, based on the numbers presented in the story, was $156.87. Moreover, the reporter hedged needlessly by saying the average was "about" $160.15 – the reported average was calculated with double decimal-point precision.

Numbers sensationalized. In a few instances, figures were overplayed for apparent dramatic effect. For example, in a story headlined "Pitt County jury awards

$525 million," readers do not learn until the twelfth and final paragraph that the actual amount accorded the wronged victim was $75 million because of a state cap on punitive damages. A story about an award-winning day-care center noted that the fees are "almost twice what the average parent pays in the Triangle," making the school beyond the reach of many parents. Perhaps, but according to the numbers provided in the story, the fees are 69 percent to 80 percent above the regional average. Adding to the confusion is a headline that heralds the school's "affordable fees."

Unquestioning use of numbers. Perhaps more troubling than misuse of numbers were instances of credulous use of numbers. For example, in a story about a freeway traffic accident that clogged four lanes of travel, the reporter cited a state official who said the regional economy suffers a $100,000 loss an hour for each lane closure on an interstate highway (October 16, 1998, B-1). The financial tab of the two-hour traffic jam, the story concluded, was $800,000 – a figure that seems highly inflated. Supposing that a hundred $400-an-hour lawyers were stuck in the traffic jam (equaling an $80,000 loss), it still would be hard to come up with a figure as large as $800,000. In a business story about the merger of two travel companies, the article says the partnership will lead to annual sales in excess of $900 million -- $300 million more than individual company sales combined (November 3, 1998, D-1). Mergers can generate synergy in which the resulting total is greater than the pieces, but some skepticism, or at least explanation, is called for when making such a claim.

Even lighter fare requires numerical vigilance. In a story about Raleigh's annual Christmas parade, *The News & Observer* reported that 70,000 people lined up along the 1.2 mile route (November 22, 1998, B-1). By doing the arithmetic, a diligent reporter would discover that the crowd estimate would require on each side of the street a line of parade observers jammed side-by-side, five-people deep, every twelve inches of the route. In a feature story about food at the State Fair, it was reported that "cotton candy, a low-fat snack, contains an average of 250 calories per serving. They are sold in bags of four servings" (October 17, 1998, B-3). Surely, nobody really expects a customer to share a purchase of cotton candy with three others, but the reporter appears to have accepted without question the division of what really amounts to a 1,000-calorie snack.

Naked numbers. Other stories fell short because they provided numbers without interpretation. For example, in a page-one story entitled "HMOs leave consumers clueless," the reporter cited the need for guidance in interpreting performance statistics that had been reluctantly released by health maintenance organizations (September 24, 1998, A-1). But in presenting data that represents HMO track records, the story offers virtually no guidance in how to evaluate the numbers. It is no wonder that, as the story reported, HMOs are loath to share the figures, and consumers are baffled! If reporters do not take the time to interpret the numbers, how can they expect readers to understand their meaning? In an article on the impact of a proposed tobacco settlement, a front-page story cites an economist who estimates that every 10 percent increase in cigarette prices causes a 4 percent drop in cigarette consumption (November 29, 1998, A-1). But the reporter failed to do the arithmetic, leaving readers to calculate that the effect of the tobacco settlement, expected to boost cigarette prices 45 cents a pack, would lead to a 10.5 percent dip in smoking in North Carolina.

Sometimes, stories were rich in statistical perspective but lacked human dimension. For example, *The News & Observer* reported with convincing statistical detail that African Americans have made remarkable gains in economic prosperity over the past five years (October 4, 1998, A-1). The story relied on a variety of sources of data to show that, for the first time since the Civil Rights era of the 1960s, "blacks are once again closing the economic chasm that has separated them from white America." However, entirely missing were African-Americans discussing how new-found prosperity affects their lives, a dimension that would have given a human face to the data.

Mathematics Required

A follow-up investigation was conducted to gauge how often math is required in daily news reporting. In a 30-day content review, 536 local bylined news and business stories were examined to determine whether quantitative skills were involved. As shown in Table 2, nearly half of the stories examined were found to require some sort of mathematical calculation or numerical point of comparison. Slightly more than half of the stories examined in the A-section and approximately two-thirds of business stories involved quantitative skills. Only in the metro section were numbers-based stories in the minority.

Table 2. Percentages of local news stories involving quantitative skills

News Section	N	Math-based (%)	Math-free (%)
A	137	53.3	46.7
Metro	279	38.4	61.6
Business	120	65.0	35.0
Overall	536	48.1*	51.9*

* The margin of error is 4.2 percent at the 95 percent confidence level.

A two-way contingency table analysis was conducted to evaluate whether math-based stories varied significantly by section of the newspaper. Overall, the proportion of stories involving math was found related to placement in the newspaper (Pearson χ = 25.824, $p < .001$). Follow-up pairwise comparisons were conducted to evaluate the difference between each section of the newspaper. Table 3 shows the results of these analyses.The only pair-wise difference that was not significant was between Section A and business news, and it came close.

Table 3. Results for the pair-wise comparisons using the Holm's sequential Bonferroni method

Comparison	Pearson Chi-square	p-value	Required p-value for significance[3]	Significance
Metro - Business	23.96	.001	.0167	*
Sec. A - Metro	8.35	.004	.025	*
Sec. A - Business	3.62	.057	.05	NS

*P < required p

The proportion of math-based stories also tended to vary within each section, by content, and according to the day's events. Stories involving numbers most often appeared in the front of each news section, while the majority of stories that did not require mathematics were positioned on inside pages. Stories covering crime, schools, and feature topics were among the types of news reporting that commonly did not involve mathematics. While local news coverage overall tended to be evenly split between stories that were math-based and those that were not, there was considerable variation from day to day. The proportion of math-based stories in a single newspaper ranged from a low of

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[3] The Holm's sequential Bonferroni method was used to control for Type I error at the .05 level across all three comparisons.

28 percent to a high of 90 percent. Variation was even more extreme on the front page. On several days, all of the local news stories on A-1 were math-based; on one light news day, none of the stories involved quantitative information.

The proportion of stories involving math identified in the 30-day review fell well short of the two-thirds of numbers-based stories identified in the pilot study. The most likely explanation for the difference is that the second review involved a more stringent operational definition of what constitutes a story requiring quantitative skills. The pilot study also examined stories over a week, providing a smaller sample and greater possibility of sampling error. Nonetheless, the results of the 30-day review support the proposition that quantitative skills are commonly required in daily newspaper journalism.

Discussion

Most of the errors identified in this phase of the investigation involved elementary mathematics. Simple arithmetic revealed rounding mistakes and other figures that did not tally. Inappropriate use of terminology generally involved a misunderstanding of basic mathematical applications, not advanced statistical concepts. Poor comprehension of numbers also led to redundancy and fuzzy description. In teaching vigorous writing, grammarian William Strunk (1979) declares, "omit needless words!" (p. xiii) The imperative here should be, "omit needless numbers!" When complex numbers were presented without interpretation, it appeared as a tacit admission that the newspaper did not understand its own figures. As troubling as misuse of numbers was the unquestioning use of figures, resulting in news stories with dubious claims and unsupported extrapolated figures. The lesson here is that journalists need to use numbers better to expose – not parrot – hyperbole.

While few of the errors identified were egregious, they cannot be dismissed as unimportant. A 1998 survey commissioned by the American Society of Newspaper Editors found that even small errors feed public skepticism about a newspaper's credibility (Urban & Associates 1998). Numerical inaccuracy may be especially damaging to newspaper credibility because the errors often are self-evident. It does not take specialized knowledge of a news topic for a discerning reader to see that math terms are misused or that numbers in a story are inconsistent with the accompanying graphical display. From a statistical perspective, the 43 types of errors identified are relatively small – less than three error types for every hundred stories examined. However, from an astute reader's perspective, the incidence of error could be quite disconcerting – a unique example of blatant misuse of numbers could be found, on average, in every other newspaper. As the Poynter Institute (1998) notes, "Without math skills, journalists are bound to fall short in their quest for accuracy. And if they keep their jobs, their numerical incompetence will only undermine the already shaky credibility of the news organizations for which they work."

The study suggests that when journalists misuse numbers in the news, what is generally lacking is common sense, not higher math. Also apparently missing is the skepticism and the attention to accuracy that journalists routinely apply in other aspects of their work. The kinds of errors identified suggest there is a tendency for reporters and editors to take numbers on faith, overlooking implausible claims and numerical inconsistencies. The proportion of errors involving graphics – nearly a quarter of the error types identified – underscores that artists need to be included in remedial efforts to improve newspaper use of numbers. That the errors identified were self-evident also highlights the central role that the copy editor can play in keeping math mistakes at bay. In short, tackling innumeracy in the newsroom involves the entire editorial process.

As a case study, the results presented here cannot be generalized across newspapers. But if elementary math errors are commonly found in *The News & Observer*, recently named in the *Columbia Journalism Review* as one of the nation's 15 best newspapers (1999), it is reasonable to surmise that these kinds of errors likely will be found in other newspapers less dedicated to quality. A national study of mathematical accuracy in the press is needed to confirm or refute the hypothesis. The results of the investigation raise – but leave unanswered – a fundamental question: If most errors identified involve rudimentary math, why do these kinds of mistakes routinely creep into the newspaper? The content review identifies the types of mistakes made but not how they occur. This study deals only with mathematical errors discernible from the facts given in the story, while other kinds of errors remain undetected. Also unexamined is the willingness and the competence of journalists to work through mathematical issues. These questions warrant further study.

The study's focus on mathematical errors could leave the mistaken impression that *The News & Observer* cannot get its numbers straight. In fact, not only were the vast majority of stories free of mathematical error, but the content review yielded an array of local news articles in which numbers were used artfully to give a story sharper edge and greater depth. Moreover, of the 1,500 news stories reviewed for this study, not a single article was found to have miscalculated percentage change – a noteworthy achievement in a profession notorious for not getting percentages right.

While many journalists apparently chose their profession because they prefer to work with words, not numbers, the study underscores that math has become an inescapable part of reporting. With half of local news stories carried in *The News & Observer* involving some sort of mathematical calculation or numerical point of comparison, today's journalists must deal routinely with numbers in their work. The results here give additional weight to Victor Cohn's (1989) math dictum, "Like it or not, we must wade in" (p. 4).

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Newsroom Numeracy: A Case Study of Mathematical Competence and Confidence

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Abstract

By testing the ability of reporters and editors to perform math tasks commonly encountered in their work, this case study of a metropolitan daily newspaper provides a baseline assessment of numeracy in the newsroom. The study also examines mathematical confidence of journalists. With strong performers in math outnumbering weak performers, the results challenge the view that most journalists cannot handle even elementary mathematics. However, nearly 20 percent of journalists could not correctly answer the majority of math questions posed to them. Testing revealed high math anxiety even among strong math performers. The results support the claim that journalism is a refuge for students uncomfortable with math. The study also documents a gender gap in mathematics skills and confidence. Drawing from the results, strategies for improving numeracy in the newsroom are proposed and recommendations are made for further research.

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Newsroom Numeracy:
A Case Study of Mathematical Competence and Confidence

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Numbers are a fact of life for modern journalists. As the late Victor Cohn, a former *Washington Post* reporter, observes in his authoritative guide *News & Numbers* (1989), "We journalists like to think we deal mainly in facts and ideas, but much of what we report is based on numbers. Politics comes down to votes. Budgets and dollars dominate government. The economy, business, employment, sports – all demand numbers. . . . Like it or not, we must wade in" (pp. 3-4).

Numbers are not only unavoidable in journalism, but when applied effectively, they serve as mortar for credibility, accuracy, objectivity, and fairness. Numbers can be used to confirm, refute and qualify claims (e.g., Feola 1995). They give authority to news reporting (Radding 1994; Houston 1999). The Poynter Institute for Media Studies (1998) notes, "Without math skills, journalists are bound to fall short in their quest for accuracy. And if they keep their jobs, their numerical incompetence will only undermine the already shaky credibility of the news organizations for which they work." Numbers also can be used to reveal underlying social and economic trends (Jones 1997). The job of the reporter is to dig out, interpret, and accurately communicate numbers in a way that gives meaning to the data. Considering numeracy one of ten essential competencies for journalists, the Poynter Institute (1998) declares, "Simply put, journalists need math skills to make sense of numbers the way they need language skills to make sense of words" (p. 7).

But the reality, by many accounts, is that journalists use numbers poorly. Says Cohn (1989): "Let's face it, we often report poorly because we fail to understand statistics, or take them into account or demand them, or get bamboozled by phony or unreliable numbers." Even the *New York Times*, which prides itself as the nation's premier newspaper of record, acknowledges it has problems getting its numbers straight (Frankel 1995; Seligman 1995). In a study of 61 television stations in 20 cities, researchers concluded that newscasters generally used numbers badly – and often not at all (Galdieri 1999). Columnist James J. Kilpatrick, who collects examples of mathematical errors in newspapers, has found so many elementary miscalculations that he ruefully concludes that many journalists cannot handle even grade-school math. Kilpatrick (1999) states, "People who write for a living should never be left alone with mathematics. They are almost bound to mess up" (p. 5G).

While the need for mathematically competent journalists is self-evident, little study has been conducted to assess the math skills that journalists bring to the profession. Also lacking is research probing the extent that math anxiety pervades the newsroom. This case study provides a baseline assessment of math skills and confidence levels of the news staff of a metropolitan daily newspaper. The study also examines the relationships of math skills and confidence with education, gender, job function and other demographic and professional characteristics. In doing so, this research seeks to help guide efforts to improve mathematical competency in the newsroom and journalism classroom, as well as to establish the groundwork for further study of this age-old challenge.

Literature Review

Journalistic misuse and abuse of numbers and math is well documented. In a seminal accuracy study more than a half century ago, Mitchell Charnley (1936) of the University of Minnesota found that three Minneapolis daily newspapers repeatedly got their numbers wrong. Mathematical and numerical errors have been detected in a long line of accuracy surveys that followed Charnley's path-setting efforts (e.g. Brown 1965; Berry 1967; Tillinghast 1982; Maier 2001). In more recent years, journalistic innumeracy[1] has been found to contribute to inaccurate and misleading stories regarding political polls (Frankel 1996), banking (Levinson 1992), the homeless (Hewitt 1996), African-Americans (Gilens 1996), the poor (Gilens 1996), child abuse (Nieman Reports 1993), Social Security and Medicare (Wildavsky 1997), drug abuse (Orcutt and Turner 1993), sports (MacNeal 1997), technological and natural disaster (Singer and Endreny 1993), and other topical issues. After reviewing more than 100 news stories on coverage of educational issues, investigators lamented the media's "appalling lack of understanding of statistics and social science research" (Berliner and Binder 1998).

The challenge the United States faces overall in achieving adequate levels of numeracy also is well established. For example, the Third International Mathematics and Science Study, in which 500,000 students were tested in 41 countries, placed American 12th-graders well below the world average in math and science proficiency, and no country ranked lower than the United States among students in advanced math (Chaddock 1998). Middle-school students in the United States ranked 28th, placing the nation behind Bulgaria, Thailand and other developing countries (National Education Association 1997; Mollison 1999). Concern about the lack of a mathematically proficient workforce prompted five large U.S. companies to pay for a $2 million initiative establishing model math standards for eighth graders. Businesses are investing in school math education because the alternatives, teaching math skills to new employees or moving to a country with higher math standards, are considered even more expensive (Mollison 1999).

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[1] Innumeracy is defined as "an inability to deal comfortably with the fundamental notions of numbers and chance" (Paulos, 1988, p. 3).

Many investigators have puzzled over why so many otherwise intelligent adults stumble over math. One reason, researchers suggest, is that innumeracy comes from failure of nerve as well as intellect. Contends Sheila Tobias (1993), author of *Overcoming Math Anxiety*, most educated people have "all the cognitive equipment they need to do advanced algebra, intermediate-level statistics, and college calculus. The problem . . . remains, they just don't *believe* they do" (p. 10). Research documents that math anxiety[2] is problematic even for college students who are schooled in math and who plan to pursue majors and careers requiring extensive mathematics (Betz 1978). Conversely, high confidence in math has been found to be positively related to perceived usefulness of math, motivation to use math, and competence in a range of computational and conceptual skills involved with math (Fennema and Sherman 1978; Pajares and Miller 1994). Math anxiety and confidence are so closely interrelated that researchers have concluded that the two phenomena represent opposite extremes of the same construct (Fennema and Sherman 1976). In short, math anxiety/confidence, though a poor predictor of math ability, may be a good predictor of math performance, although the relationship between math ability and anxiety may be indirect (Casey, Nuttall et al. 1997; Smith and Michael 1998). Mathematics self-efficacy,[3] a related construct, has been found to affect educational and career choices (e.g., Lent and Lopez 1991; 1993). Anecdotal evidence also suggests that wordsmiths, fearful of math, seek careers in journalism because they assume that math skills will be unimportant (e.g. Mencher 1995; Denham 1997; Curtin and Maier 1999).

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[2] Math anxiety is defined as "the panic, helplessness, paralysis, and mental disorganization that arises from some people when they are required to solve a mathematical problem" (Tobias and Weissbrod 1980).

The relationship between math anxiety and gender differences in math achievement has been the subject of much study since the publication of a controversial 1974 book in which two female researchers (Maccoby and Jacklin 1974) posited that men were inherently superior in mathematical ability to women -- and countered two years later in *Ms.* magazine with a feminist analysis titled "Math Anxiety: Why Is a Smart Girl Like You Counting on Your Fingers?" (Tobias 1976). The preponderance of research suggests that a gender gap in math performance exists, with females reporting more math anxiety than males (e.g., Betz 1978; Hackett and Betz 1985; Campbell and Evans 1997). The gender gap in mathematics reflects, in part, differences in education; that is, women at an early age tended to lack the self-efficacy to enroll in math classes as frequently as men or to perform as well in math classes as men (e.g., Betz and Hackett 1983; Lent, Lopez, and Bieschke 1991; Pajares and Miller 1994). However, gender differences in math are not found across the board and, in fact, may be narrowing (Campbell and Evans

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[3] Mathematics self-efficacy has been defined as "a situational or problem-specific assessment of an individual's confidence in her or his ability to successfully perform or accomplish a particular [mathematics] task or problem" (Hackett and Betz 1989).

1997; Casey, Nutall, and Pezaris 1997). In the Third International Mathematics and Science Study, the United States was one of three countries (along with Hungary and South Africa) that did not have a significant gender gap in general math knowledge (Chaddock 1998). Research also suggests that math anxiety appears to explain little about the differences in gender performance when the effects of related attitudinal phenomena, such as perceived math ability and perceived value of math, are taken into account (Casey, Nuttall et al. 1997). Regardless of the reasons for differences in math performance, the gender gap is an especially salient issue for journalism as women dominate enrollments at all levels of journalism and mass communication education (Weaver and Wilhoit 1996; Kosicki and Becker 1998; Becker et al., 1999).

Research questions

While conventional wisdom suggests that reporters and editors are poor at math, the literature reveals no systematic study of the actual ability of journalists to calculate percentage change, interpret indices, and perform other common mathematical functions. It is also said that journalists tend to avoid math or to use math ineffectively because they lack the confidence to work with numbers, but empirical evidence is lacking to back the claim. To help address the gap in research, this study provides a baseline assessment of math skills and confidence levels of news reporters and editors at *The News & Observer*, a seven-day morning newspaper based in Raleigh, North Carolina. The study investigates the following research questions:

(1) How do math skills vary among news-editorial staff at *The News & Observer*?

(2) How do math confidence levels vary among news-editorial staff at *The News & Observer*?

(3) How do levels of math skills and levels of math confidence vary by gender, age, experience, education, beat and job responsibility?

(4) What is the relationship between confidence in one's mathematical skills and mathematical competency?

Method

In cooperation with *The News & Observer*, an exam testing basic mathematical skills used by journalists was administered at a series of math workshops conducted at the newspaper's main office and its Durham and Chapel Hill bureaus.[4] Workshop participants also were given a short descriptive survey and a ten-item scale designed to assess confidence in mathematics. Workshop attendance was required by management of reporters, news research staff, photographers, graphic artists, copy editors and editors with direct supervisory responsibility. At the workshops, however, participants were informed verbally and in a written consent form that test-taking was voluntary and that the results were confidential. Each test-taker was notified of his or her results on the math test but individual results were not otherwise disclosed.

Instruments

Mathematical skill assessment. The Mathematics Competency Test for Journalists was used to assess the ability of journalists to perform math tasks encountered in their work. This instrument was chosen because it specifically evaluates math skills commonly practiced by reporters and editors. Designed by Philip Meyer and William

Cloud, both University of North Carolina journalism professors with extensive reporting and editing experience, the 25-item test assesses the ability to apply basic math (i.e., calculating percentage change) to real-life problems in daily journalism (i.e., expressing change in salary in percentage terms). Though no knowledge beyond junior-high math is required, the test is sufficiently difficult to provide ample variance.[5]

The test has been administered to several hundred working journalists at regional professional conferences in Minnesota and Virginia. Faculty of the Poynter Institute for Media Studies at St. Petersburg, Florida also served as test subjects when the exam was administered at a 1998 seminar titled "Numeracy for Journalists." In addition, the test has been given to journalism students at Arizona State University, the University of Washington and the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. *The News & Observer* requires the exam of applicants for reporting and copy-editing positions. The breadth of the exam's usage indicates that the test has been widely scrutinized by news professionals and holds face validity.

To assess an instrument's stability, researchers commonly use a test-retest procedure in which the correlation coefficient is computed between the two tests. In this study, test scores of workshop participants were compared to results of those who had taken a version of the test in recent years as prospective employees.[6] The test-retest

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[4] Twelve workshops were conducted January through March, 2000.

[5] For example, test scores of a group of graduate journalism students ranged from 32 % to 96 % correct: the mean percentage correct was 65.0 (16.2 out of 25 answers correct with a standard deviation of 5.1). Similar results were obtained when the test was administered to working journalists attending professional conferences (Philip Meyer, personal files, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill).

[6] Only approximate comparisons could be made. *The News & Observer* permits prospective employees 40 minutes to complete the test, compared to 20 minutes provided in this study's administration of the test. Also, the newspaper used two versions of the math test to assess the math skills of prospective employees.

correlation of a convenience sample was .84, indicating reasonable stability. One of the limitations of the test-retest procedure is that a person taking the same test twice might remember responses or learn from the previous administration of the exam, thus falsely inflating reliability or leading to improved results on the second exam (Wimmer and Dominick 1997). But the scores of those who took the identical test twice were not statistically different from those taking the exam for the first time, and the scores were in the opposite direction to be expected if "learning" had occurred. In addition, the overall consistency of results when the test was given to other working journalists and to graduate journalism students provides further support of the instrument's reliability: Similar results were achieved when the test was administered among similar populations.[7]

Mathematical confidence. To explore the relationship between confidence in mathematics and mathematical competency at *The News & Observer*, journalists were administered a slightly revised version of the Fennema-Sherman Confidence in Learning Mathematics Scale. The confidence scale, developed in 1976 by University of Wisconsin researchers Elizabeth Fennema and Julia Sherman, measures "confidence in one's ability to learn and to perform well on mathematical tasks. The dimension ranges from distinct lack of confidence to definite confidence" (Fennema and Sherman 1976, p. 4). This particular attitudinal scale was chosen because of the strong research evidence supporting the relationship between confidence in math and performance in math (i.e., Fennema and Sherman 1978; Sherman 1979; Fennema 1980; Betz and Hackett 1983).

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[7] Regardless of venue, about 65 to 68 percent of the questions were, on average, answered correctly.

Because the confidence scale was originally designed for administration to high school students, several items were rewritten to be more appropriate for journalists. Ten of the 12 items of the original scale were used for evaluating math confidence at *The News & Observer*. On a five-point Likert-like scale ranging from 1 (strongly agree) to 5 (strongly disagree), the journalists were asked to respond to five positive statements about their confidence in math (i.e. "Generally, I have felt secure about attempting mathematics") and five negative statements (i.e., "For some reason, math seems unusually hard for me"). The positive and negative statements were randomly intermixed.

The reported split-half reliability of the confidence scale was .93 (Fennema and Sherman 1976). Subsequent research also supports the reliability and validity of the Fennema-Sherman scales (Betz 1978; Hackett and Betz 1989). Following administration of the scale at *The News & Observer*, internal consistency of the instrument in the present study was assessed through two measures: coefficient alpha and a split-half coefficient expressed as a Spearman-Brown corrected correlation. For consistency of direction in scale, reverse scores were used for positive items expressing confidence in math. The coefficient alpha was .94 and the split-half coefficient was .91, each indicating satisfactory reliability.

Subjects and Data Analysis

Data analysis was based on the results of full-time *News & Observer* employees whose principal duties involve reporting, editing, or researching news-editorial content. Included in the study's sample were reporters, copy editors and supervisory editors responsible for coverage of news, business, features, and sports. Staff artists were included in the sample because they are responsible for graphical display of numbers, but photographers and layout designers were excluded because they have little influence over how numbers are used in the newspaper's editorial content. News researchers and a database analyst were included because they produce quantitative information, but researchers classified as archivists or "enhancers" were excluded because they primarily file and retrieve news stories rather than create or assemble new information. Also excluded from the sample were part-time employees and employees on leave. In all, the results of 24 workshop participants were excluded from the sample used for data analysis.[8]

Based on the criteria described above, the sample consisted of 148 *News & Observer* news-editorial employees (82 men and 66 women), yielding an overall participation rate of 90.2 percent. Participation from all departments except sports was 89 percent or higher. The participation rate by the sports department was 72.7 percent. The relative lack of participation by sports reporters and editors may reflect scheduling differences (most of the workshops were held midweek during daytime hours, while sports staff frequently work evenings and weekends) and perhaps a perceived lack of relevance of math in sports coverage. Three departments – information graphics, research, and business news – delivered 100 percent participation.

In statistical analysis of the data, the dependent variable was either the mean confidence score or the mean math test score (expressed as the percentage of questions answered correctly). The mean confidence score also served as an independent variable to evaluate mathematics confidence as a predictor of performance on the math test. The independent-samples t test was used to evaluate the differences in mean math test or math confidence scores between dichotomous independent variables, i.e., gender, journalism degree. A one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used to evaluate whether mean test or confidence scores vary significantly among categorical independent variables, i.e., job classification, level of math education. When the ANOVA *F* test showed the group means differ significantly, post-hoc multiple comparisons were made to determine which groups differ from each other. The Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient was used to evaluate the relationship of test scores with variables with interval data, i.e., age, years in the news business. A p level .05 or lower was required for statistical significance. To avoid Type I errors in multiple comparisons, Bonferroni and Tukey HSD procedures were used to adjust observed significance levels.

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[8] Workshop participants excluded from data analysis answered, on average, 7 percent fewer questions correctly on the math test than the sample population. The difference was not statistically significant ($t(168) = -1.82$, $p = .07$) nor sufficient to substantively alter the overall analysis of results.

Results

Descriptive Statistics

The mean age of *News & Observer* employees participating in the study was 38.5 years, slightly older than the average for U.S. journalists (Weaver and Wilhoit 1996). The sample's gender mix -- 55 percent men, 45 percent women – is fairly reflective of overall news-editorial staffing at *The News & Observer*. But *The News & Observer's* gender mix is unusual among U.S. daily newspapers; nationally, women make up only a third or so of journalists employed in newspaper newsrooms (Weaver and Wilhoit 1996). Most *News &*

Observer employees participating in the study were seasoned journalists, averaging more than 14 years in the news business, and had considerable academic training in journalism. More than two-thirds had earned an undergraduate degree in journalism or a related subject, and nearly a quarter had a graduate degree in journalism or a related subject. Years of experience and the level of journalism education by *News & Observer* employees was well above the national average for U.S. media (Weaver and Wilhoit 1996).

News & Observer employees also are remarkably well schooled in math. All but one participant had taken at least high-school mathematics. Nearly 80 percent reported taking at least one math course in college or university. For the majority, however, it had been many years – on average, 18 years – since they studied math. For nearly a third of news-editorial employees, it had been 25 years or more since their last math course. Moreover, many *News & Observer* employees had excelled in their math studies. According to self-reported scholastic achievement, nearly a quarter of the participants received mostly A's in junior and senior high school math. Another third or so said they earned a mix of A's and B's and the vast majority reported receiving B's or better in secondary school mathematics. Only 5 percent reported receiving C's or lower in math.

Math Test Results

The mean raw score for the Mathematics Competency Test for Journalists was 17.1 out of a maximum possible score of 25, yielding a mean percent score of 68.5. The distribution of scores was negatively skewed (skewness = - 0.62, standard error = .20). The median raw score was 18, with 22.6 percent of test-takers missing three or fewer questions. But nearly 18 percent answered less than half of the math questions correctly. The overall results are similar to other professional journalists and graduate journalism students that have been tested in recent years. What distinguishes *The News & Observer* scores is that the results reflect the mathematical competency of a broad spectrum of the news staff, not the self-selected sample of working reporters and editors attending a professional conference or students enrolled in a graduate journalism program.

As shown in Table 1, copy editors did best overall on the math exam, correctly answering, on average, 72 percent of the questions. Graphic artists, yielding a mean score of 63 percent correct, performed as a group the poorest on the exam. Mean scores for reporters, supervisory editors, and news researchers were close to the overall mean. A one-way analysis of variance was conducted to evaluate differences in math scores across job functions. The ANOVA was not significant. In a comparison of math results by department (shown in Table 2), news scored highest, closely followed by features. The sports and graphics departments produced the lowest mean scores. Statistical tests once again indicated that the differences in group means were not significant.

Table 1 Math test results by job classification

	N	Mean score (percent correct)	Standard deviation
Copy editor	30	72.1	18.0
Reporter	68	68.0	19.1
News researcher	8	68.0	15.7
Supervisory editor	33	67.5	18.0
Graphic artist	7	62.9	23.6
Total sample	146	68.5	18.6

Note: In a one-way analysis of variance, differences among group means were not significant (F (4, 141) = .478, p = .752).

Table 2 Math test results by department

	N	Mean score (percent correct)	Standard deviation
News	104	70.2	18.3
Features	19	68.0	18.2
Sports	16	61.5	19.0
Graphics	7	60.0	20.3
Total sample	146	68.5	18.6

Note: In a one-way analysis of variance, differences among group means were not significant (F (3, 142) = 1.56, p = .199).

Results indicate, however, a significant gap in mathematical competence between bureau and main office employees. The mean score for bureau employees was 10 percentage points below employees in the main office, a difference substantively as well as statistically significant (t (144) = 2.43, p = .02). It is common practice in the newspaper industry to place less skilled, less experienced reporters and editors in news bureaus. An examination of the data found that bureau reporters and editors at *The News & Observer* were, indeed, somewhat younger and less experienced than their main-office colleagues. But overall, bureau employees were neither exceptionally young (the mean age of a bureau news-editorial employee was 35 years) nor inexperienced (11 years, on average, in the news business). The gender mix in bureaus was also nearly the same as in the main office. In addition, bureau staffers reported virtually the same level of college math education as main office workers and only slightly less proficiency in high school math. In short, none of the demographic factors examined in this study accounted for the difference in math skills between bureau and main office news employees.

The test results also indicate a gender gap in mathematical competence at *The News & Observer*. The mean math score for women was 64.1 percent, compared to 72.0 percent for men, a difference that is statistically significant (t (144) = 2.60, p = .01). Gender differences were at both ends of the performance spectrum. Twenty-three percent of women correctly answered less than half of the questions on the exam, compared to 13 percent of men. The biggest gender differences were among the top performers: 12.5 percent of women scored 88 percent or higher on the math exam, compared to 30.5 percent of men.

Contrary to expectations based on the literature, *News & Observer* women participating in this study pursued advanced math in nearly equal proportion to men and, in fact, reported receiving slightly higher grades than men in high school math. Female news staffers at *The News & Observer* were, on average, six years younger than their male colleagues, and consequently, more recently educated in math. Despite a national trend of diminishing gender differences in math performance, the gender gap was even wider among youthful employees at *The News & Observer*. The gender gap in mean math test scores was 5.6 percentage points between men and women 35 years and older, but 11.8 percentage points between younger employees. However, the difference was not statistically significant.

Education

Mean math test scores consistently improved with higher levels of math education. *News & Observer* journalists who studied math in graduate school scored 15 percentage points above those who took only high-school math. A one-way analysis of variance was conducted to evaluate the relationship between math performance and level of math education. The ANOVA was not significant. An independent-samples t test, however, indicated that the difference in math scores was statistically significant between employees who took graduate-level math and employees with less math education ($t(139) = 2.06$, $p = .041$).

The mean math test score for *News & Observer* employees with an undergraduate degree in journalism or a related subject was seven percentage points below employees without an undergraduate journalism degree. In an independent-samples t test, the difference was statistically significant ($t(143) = -2.12$, $p = .036$). Conversely, *News & Observer* employees with a graduate degree in journalism or related subject answered, on average, 73 percent of the math test questions correctly, six percentage points higher than those without the degree. The difference was not statistically significant ($t(144) = 1.54$, $p = .126$). The superior performance also cannot be attributed solely to graduate education -- less than a third of employees with masters degrees in journalism reported taking any math courses in their post-baccalaureate studies.[9]

Math scores generally were related to math performance in secondary school. Employees who reported receiving mostly A's in school math also yielded as a group the highest mean math test scores, answering 79.4 percent correctly, on average. By comparison, employees reporting below a B average in math had a mean math test score 20 percentage points lower than the "A" students. The ANOVA was significant ($F(3, 142) = 8.64$, $p = < .001$). The differences were significant between the "A" students and students in every other grade category. Perhaps a more telling statistic evaluates the difference in math test scores using a dichotomized independent variable measuring school math performance. Employees who reported receiving B's or better in math had a mean test score of 71 percent correct, compared to a mean score of 58 percent for employees reporting below a B average in math. The 13-point difference is substantively and statistically significant (t (143) = 3.81, p = .002).[10]

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[9] These results may simply be an artifact of graduate admissions procedures, in which students are selected in part on their quantitative scores on the Graduate Record Exam.

Correlation coefficients were computed to evaluate the relationship of math test scores with age, years of journalism experience, and the number of years since employees had last studied math. Despite the commonly heard complaint among journalists that they are either too old to learn math or that they are being asked to apply math skills they have not studied for years, the correlation between mathematical competency (as measured by the test) and age or year of their last math class was extremely weak and not statistically significant. There also was no significant relationship between years of journalism experience and performance on the math test.

Confidence in Mathematics

The mean math confidence score on the Fennema-Sherman scale was 3.14, just slightly above the midpoint of the five-point scale (1 represents the lowest possible confidence value, five the highest). The distribution of confidence scores was slightly negatively skewed (skewness = - 0.33, standard error = .27). Fourteen percent of the sample had a mean score of 2.0 or below, 18 percent had a score 4.0 or above; the median was 3.2. *The News & Observer's* mean confidence in math score was below mean scores for students tested in junior high school (Fennema and Sherman 1978), high school (Fennema and Sherman 1976; Sherman 1979), and college (Betz and Hackett 1983). The newspaper's confidence score was similar to the mean score in a study of high-risk college students who did not meet minimal admission requirements for regular matriculation (Dwinell and Higbee 1991).

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[10] Because the Levene's test of equality of error variance was significant, p levels are based on the

The Pearson product-moment correlation between the math confidence scale and math competency test scores was positive, moderately strong, and statistically significant. (r (146) = .40, p < .001). Table 3 shows that mathematical confidence was a stronger predictor of math competency (as measured by test scores) at *The News & Observer* than math grades in secondary school or level of math education. Math confidence also was a stronger predictor of math competency than age, years of professional experience, or the number of years since math was last studied.

Table 3 Pearson correlation coefficients for confidence in learning math and age, years of professional news experience, and years since last studied math

	Test score	Math grades	Math education	Age	News experience	Last math
Math confidence	.403*	.450**	.153	.052	.008	-.039
(N)	(146)	(147)	(147)	(146)	(145)	(137)
Test score	--	.326**	.173*	.048	-.009	-.024
(N)		(145)	(142)	(143)	(143)	(135)
Math grades		--	.207	-.198*	-.161	-.165
(N)			(143)	(145)	.054	(136)
Math Education			--	.067	.071	-.288**
(N)				(142)	(141)	(134)
Age				--	.889**	.819**
(N)					(144)	(136)

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assumption that variances are not equal.

News experience	--	.780**
(N)		(136)

Note: * Correlation is significant at the .05 level (2-tailed)
** Correlation is significant at the .01 level (2-tailed)

As also shown in Table 3, math confidence was significantly related to how well *News & Observer* employees said they performed in secondary school math. To a lesser extent, confidence also increased according to the amount of math education employees received, but the relationship was not statistically significant. *News & Observer* staffers who majored in journalism tended to have less confidence in learning math than those who studied other subjects. The difference was not statistically significant (t (145) = -1.36, p = .178). Differences in math confidence scores by job classification and by news department were small and not statistically significant.

Consistent with prior research (Fennema and Sherman 1978; Sherman 1979; Betz and Hackett 1983; Dwinell and Higbee 1991), women in this study reported less confidence in mathematics than men. On a five-point scale, the mean confidence score for women was 2.9, compared to 3.4 for men, a difference that is statistically significant (t (146) = 2.94, p = .004). The gender gap persists at both ends of the confidence spectrum. The percentage of women with a mean confidence score below two on the five-point scale was three times greater than that of men. The percentage of men with a confidence score greater than four was more than twice that of women. The gender gap was most pronounced among younger employees. The mean confidence score for women under 35 was 2.8, compared to 3.6 for younger men, a difference that is statistically significant (t (48) = 3.02, p = .004). The gender differences in math confidence among employees 35 years and older was small and not significant (t (94) = 1.31, p =.19).

Discussion

The results challenge the widely held presumption – in and outside the news profession – that most journalists cannot handle even elementary mathematics (see, e.g., Mencher 1995; Kilpatrick 1999). With three-quarters of the news-editorial staff having earned B's or better in secondary school math, the majority apparently are capable of handling the kinds of elementary calculations demanded in most day-to-day reporting and editing. That 80 percent of staff also took college-level math suggests that many have the aptitude for more advanced statistical reporting. The results indicate there is a substantial number of reporters and editors who not only are proficient but excel in mathematics: A quarter of the staff reported getting mostly A's in school math and in almost equal proportion were able to score 88 percent or above on the math competency test. In sum, strong performers in math outnumbered the weak performers.

It should be viewed as encouraging that a broad spectrum of news staff at the *News & Observer* performed on the math test at, or above, the level of the self-selected groups of journalists who have taken the test in the past. It is also noteworthy that across departments and job functions the majority of employees demonstrated basic competency on the math test. Perhaps columnist Kilpatrick (1999), who declared writers cannot handle even elementary math, would rest easier with the knowledge that copy editors, the newspaper's last line of defense against error, performed as a group the best on the math exam (though the results were not statistically conclusive).

But with *News & Observer* reporters and editors unable to answer, on average, nearly a third of the questions on the math test, there is clearly room and need for improvement in basic newsroom math skills. Of particular concern is the sizable minority – nearly a fifth of the staff – who missed a majority of the math questions posed to them. It is sobering that graphic artists – whose job often entails prominent display of numbers – performed poorly on the math test. The relatively low performance by bureau employees highlights another newspaper subgroup that might be well served by remedial math education.

While the gender gap in math confidence and performance is a national phenomenon, what is puzzling about the *News & Observer* results is that women were nearly equally well educated in math as men and, according to self-reported grades, actually outperformed men in secondary school math -- educational factors that in previous research accounted for much of gender differences in math performance (Sherman 1979; Fennema 1980). Also unresolved is why bureau reporters and editors, whose characteristics are similar in many respects to main office employees, had relatively low math confidence and competency scores. These incongruities deserve further investigation, especially since increasing numbers of women are being schooled in journalism and bureaus serve as training grounds for the rising generation of journalists.

The results provide empirical evidence supporting the claim that journalism is a refuge for students uncomfortable with math: *News & Observer* employees who majored in journalism did less well in math in secondary school, took less math in college or university, scored less well on the math test, and had less confidence in math than those who studied other subjects in college. These findings are consonant with previous research linking math self-efficacy with choice of study and career. College-level math appeared to have little influence on math test scores, perhaps because the exam tests elementary math skills. However, the test results indicated a fairly strong relationship between secondary school math grades and mathematical competency, highlighting the key role early schooling plays in nurturing mathematical confidence and skills needed in daily newspaper journalism. This finding places journalism educators and newsroom managers in a primarily reactive role, but it does not diminish the need for intervention to improve numeracy in the newsroom. With the overwhelming majority of today's entry-level daily newspaper reporters and editors schooled in undergraduate journalism or media studies (Weaver and Wilhoit 1996), educators can play a central role in dispelling the notion that journalists don't need math, as well as in helping students to develop the confidence and skills needed to use numbers effectively in the newsroom.

Perhaps most intriguing is the incongruity between educational performance and math confidence at *The News & Observer*. This high-achieving news staff has a remarkably strong background in school and college-level math, yet math confidence levels were below that of general populations tested in prior studies. The results indicate that even mathematically inclined journalists suffer from math anxiety.

A limitation of this study is that the results cannot be generalized to the larger population. Studies across newsrooms are needed to confirm or deny the universality of these findings. However, it is reasonable to suspect that the problems of mathematical competence and confidence documented at *The News and Observer*, a quality newspaper with an exceptionally educated and experienced staff,[11] likely are as acute if not more so at other newspapers.

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[11] *The News & Observer*, a Pulitzer prize-winner widely cited for excellence (Moeller 1995), was named by the *Columbia Journalism Review* (1999) as one of the nation's 15 best newspapers.

In some respects, this study also put to the test the Mathematics Competency Test for Journalists. While demonstrating the test's reliability and validity, the study brings into focus some of the test's limitations. As an instrument specifically designed to test journalists' math skills, it yields results that cannot be compared across populations. The test seeks to assess basic mathematical competency; no attempt is made to evaluate the higher-level skills required of "precision journalism." The negatively skewed scores suggest that the test is too easy, at least for journalists who have a strong command of basic math. A more discriminating test would include a selection of advanced mathematical problems, such as questions assessing ability to interpret statistical significance and margin of error. This investigator sought to use exam results to identify the kinds of math problems that pose the most difficulty at *The News & Observer*. But the 25-item test proved too short and too eclectic to diagnose types of math skills and deficiencies commonly found among journalists. The apparent trade-off of an exam that tests the broad spectrum of math problems faced in journalism is that underlying mathematical concepts are not assessed by multiple questions. In summary, the Mathematics Competency Test for Journalists provides a baseline assessment of math skills in the newsroom, as it sets the standard for other instruments to assess, perhaps in even sophisticated ways, journalists' mathematical abilities.

Foremost, journalism practitioners, educators, and researchers can make a worthy contribution by designing training programs that help professional and aspiring journalists acquire not only requisite math skills but also the confidence to use them well. Training should focus on the kinds of problem-solving that help journalists develop a stronger sense of numerical proportion, statistical incongruity, and other intuitive math skills needed to make sound practical judgments when working with numbers in the news. Innumeracy among journalists cannot be overcome by an occasional workshop or class exercise. On-going training should be provided on a continuum of skill levels, enabling journalists to learn a succession of statistical competencies needed to be a "precision journalist." Numeracy also can be nurtured through modeling (i.e., displaying stories that used numbers well, providing public awards to those who put math skills to use, and appointing in-house staff as numbers consultants).

The collective commitment and resources of the news industry is needed. The American Press Institute, the Poynter Institute for Media Studies, and other media organizations should help promote numeracy through their workshops, conferences and newsletters. Just as errant use of words are publicly flogged in Kilpatrick's "Writers Art" and in the *Columbia Journalism Review's* "The Lower case," a "Numbers Watch" column could become a showcase for the media's misuse of figures (and, to provide positive reinforcement, for "laurels" honoring artful use of numbers). Media employers also need to recognize that people with quantitative skills are highly sought and draw top-dollar salaries – and then pay accordingly. These concerted efforts would signal that the media value numeracy as a core competency of modern journalism.

Ideally, nurturing mathematical competency would begin long before aspiring journalists enter the profession. Much as journalism educators now require students to master the fundamentals of AP style, they need to make basic math a requisite skill for a degree in journalism. But in doing so, they should provide the support necessary so that students who are acutely anxious with numbers can overcome their trepidation. To help nurture mathematical competency, reporting and writing exercises should routinely involve numbers. Copy editing exercises should include mathematical errors to train the prospective journalists to view numbers skeptically. Teaching computer-assisted reporting provides an ideal platform for students to develop their analytical, problem-solving skills, as well as to apply basic mathematics.

These remedies are intuitively appealing, require little specialized knowledge, and are fairly simple to execute. That is in large measure because numerical analysis is akin to journalism inquiry. While the mathematical formulae may be unfamiliar, the underlying principles – objectivity, skeptical review, reduction of complex phenomena, and balanced presentation – already are part of the journalist's everyday repertoire. Perhaps above all else, journalists need to be shown that working with numbers involves the same kind of inquisitive thinking that they apply with skill and confidence to other aspects of their work.

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ABSTRACT

Social Construction of Depression in Newspaper Frames

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The content analysis study examined the social construction of depression in United States news stories over a 14-month period. Three key areas, drawn from the literature, are set against the backdrop of stigma: news routines, exogenous influences and ideological frames. The authors found that stigmatization occurred in stories that relied on routines that focused on violence. Use of the stylistic practices *personalization* and *solutions* tended to blame the victim while simplifying causes and cures. Market interests paralleled mentions of medicine-therapies, which were twice as likely to be noted as other therapies, such as counseling. Frames, including the medical disease model and war, placed the individual at the center of depression, rather than viewing the individual within the societal or cultural context. The authors discuss the implications of such coverage.

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SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF DEPRESSION IN NEWSPAPER FRAMES

Mental health care professionals have long been interested in stigma surrounding mental illness, and during the last decade government and non-governmental agencies alike have redoubled their efforts in the United States to remove stigma from perception of mental illness. The response has been to launch public education campaigns to heighten awareness of the pervasiveness of mental illness, while challenging notions that mental illness results in violent behavior.

One target of such campaigns is media portrayals of the mentally ill. Numerous empirical studies have focused on such portrayals, ranging from depiction of the mentally ill in television entertainment programs (as part of the cultural indicators project at the University of Pennsylvania) to a study of suicide rates following news of Kurt Cobain's death in 1994 (Jobes & Berman, 1996). On balance, researchers concur that portrayals of the mentally ill are stereotyped, stigmatized and just plain false. While critics charge that print media also mischaracterize the mentally ill, studies about newspaper coverage of mental health have taken a back seat to research on movies and television, with some notable exceptions--the Glasgow Media Group's analysis of mental illness in British media (1996) and Wahl's examination of obsessive-compulsive behavior in news (2000).

The current study attempts to fill some of the gaps in newspaper coverage by examining the stigmatization of mental illness through the social construction of depression over a 14-month period in the United States. We contend that the study of depression offers a singular opportunity to examine elements of stigma against the backdrop of heightened public awareness of clinical depression and its pharmaceutical treatments. In addition to being a timely topic, depression's impact is felt by more than 19 million Americans (one in four women and one in eight men), and most sufferers remain untreated.[1]

The study asks whether and how stigma occurs in the news construction of depression by examining aspects of news routines, influence of exogenous factors, and framing. The paper begins with a review of relevant literature concerning stigma, then defines depression. We turn to aspects of news coverage, specifically routines, and then address external forces that drive coverage, such as pharmaceutical market interests. We next turn to framing, focusing on the role of metaphor and interpretive packages that reveal underlying values that may stigmatize coverage of depression. Next, the hypotheses are presented, followed by methodology and findings. Finally we discuss how the study adds to the current understanding of the social construction of depression in newspapers.

Literature Review

Stigma

Stigma is defined as a mark of shame or discredit, and is similar to the construct "credibility," which can be described as an attribute of an individual ("the witness was highly credible") or a construction of individual perception ("I found her testimony quite credible") (for a discussion, see Gunther, 1992). The parallel is that stigma can reside with the individual who is mentally ill, and is also a function of how publics perceive the mentally ill. We argue that mass media play a pivotal role in constructing the social reality surrounding depression, which in turn, helps shape perceptions about people with depression.

Stigma was defined by Goffman (1963) as a "spoiled social identity," and one that was deviant—not normal—judged by others' standards. This definition is most widely accepted among researchers today (Harvey, 2001). Stigmatized individuals are rejected by society and are not altogether human (Taylor, 2000). Finally, stereotypes reinforce value systems by portraying deviant individuals as violators of those values (Pitchford, 2001).

In order to demonstrate that news coverage stigmatizes those who are depressed, we need to compare an objective or standard definition of depression with the socially constructed version, and ask how these vary from one another. Take the example of schizophrenia. Wahl (1995) argued that schizophrenia is neither split nor multiple personality. Yet mass media "strongly and repeatedly" communicate that schizophrenia and split personality are one in the same.

We turn to the leading scientific, professional and government organizations that have a stake in depression to locate definitions.

Defining Depression

One of the leading professional mental health organizations, the American Psychiatric Association (APA)[2], classifies depression as a "mood disorder," describing it as "changes in the body's chemistry (that) influence mood and thought processes."[3]

The Diagnostic Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (IV) defines depression as "a mood disorder characterized by at least one major depressive episode with a clinical course."[4]

The National Alliance for the Mentally Ill (NAMI), an advocacy group, defines mental illness (including depression) as "disorders of the brain that disrupt a person's thinking, feeling, moods, and ability to relate to others. Just as diabetes is a disorder of the pancreas, mental illnesses are brain disorders that often result in a diminished capacity for coping with the ordinary demands of life."[5]

The National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH), a branch of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, details three types of depression: major depressive disorder, dysthemic disorder and bipolar disorder. Major depressive disorder is defined as a class of symptoms, and "a diagnosis of five or more of the symptoms" reflects major depressive disorder, while dysthemic disorder is characterized by seven of the symptoms that persist for two years. Bipolar disorder, the third type, is characterized by alternating states of mania and depression.[6]

Depression is highly treatable, according to the Websites above. Recommended treatments for depression include a combination of "talk therapy" and drug therapy.

To summarize, depression is defined by traditional stakeholder groups as changes in body chemistry, brain and mood, but is also defined as a collection of symptoms. Thus, in order to discover if stigma occurs in media coverage, we would expect to see depression characterized in opposition to definitions stated by leading professional organizations. And while critics might argue that such definitions are far from objective, they are nevertheless the standards used to explicate depression.

Stigmatized News Coverage

Stigmatized coverage may be the result of numerous factors that influence how news is created, and many theories address news construction: framing, filtering, agenda setting and building, reporter bias, organizational bias, channel characteristics, advertisers' influence, hegemony, ideology, space and time constraints, gatekeeping, and more. Our focus is on how the news routines of deviance coverage, personalized bias, the generalizing portrayal, attribution of blame, normalizing bias and source use influence the construction of depression.

News Routines. Characteristics that make individuals and events newsworthy include such attributes as timeliness, proximity and extraordinary occurrences. Violent behavior and deviant acts engender news, and stigma occurs, in part, when individuals or groups are described as deviant (Dornan, 1990; Gitlin, 1980; Shoemaker, 1984). One way in which the mentally ill are described as deviant is to characterize them as violent and as outsiders, although practitioners and scholars alike have argued strenuously that violent behavior is rare among the mentally ill (Glasgow Media Group, 1996). Still, violence makes news and we would therefore expect to find mass media reports about the mentally ill focused—in part--on violence, while depressed persons are delegitimized as abnormal.

Individualism. Routine reporting also focuses on individual-level explanations of phenomena, rather than social system explanations. Rucinski (1992) contended that emphasis in news content on individual actors rather than institutional forces "is implicitly to argue that other factors like cognitive orientations or cultural values are less potent explanatory factors" (p. 94). Individual-based explanations of phenomena, called "personalized bias," are embedded within the traditions of news coverage (Rucinksi; Price & Czillia, 1996). Bennett (1988) noted that if journalists were truly critical they would, "minimize attention to the individual power struggles, the personal motives and fortunes of leaders, and...instead...report on the evolution of issues, the powerful institutions involved and the factions—like lobby groups, special interests and powerful bureaucracies" (p. 26). In her book on science coverage, Dorothy Nelkin (1987) noted that, "Even journalists who cover numerous risk controversies for the daily papers seldom question the 'system': they prefer to conceptualize each problem separately in terms of aberrant individuals, bad companies, or ignorance" (pp. 104-105).

Scheff (1984) has argued that social and cultural settings are overlooked when theorists concentrate on the individual aspects of mental illness. When neurotic behavior is constructed as a disease—the medical model--it unfolds "relentlessly out of a psychological system that is entirely contained within the body" (p. 7). Scheff suggested researchers should instead examine the social system in which mental illness arises, while asking, "What are the conditions in a culture under which diverse kinds of rule-breaking become stable and uniform...[and when] are symptoms of mental illness the result of conforming behavior?" (p. 12). Similarly, Foucault (1965) asserted that the definition of madness is anchored in its cultural ethos, ranging from a function of idleness to romance, immorality to creativity, and violence to art. Foucault challenged madness as defined within a positivistic framework, asking, "was it madness, or a work of art? Inspiration, or hallucination...must its truth, even before its birth, be taken from the wretched truth of men, or discovered far beyond its origin, in the being that it presumes?" (p. 286).

Two researchers studying television coverage in Germany labeled one aspect of personalization as the "generalizing portrayal." Here the reporter takes an individual case, and then broadens the story by providing statistical or base-rate information. Such base-rate information is combined with illustrative cases, or exemplars: a "stylistic device used to exemplify an issue or its importance" (Daschmann & Brosius, 1999). In other words, one individual is used to illustrate all such cases, which may lead to misperception of—in this case—depression.

Thus, in the context of depression, we can surmise that journalists tend to focus on personal and individual attributes and causes, rather than the social system in which mental illness occurs.

Blame. While such coverage obscures the social context of disease, personalized bias most likely frames victims as culpable. Susan Sontag (1978) pointed out that, although the illness is the culprit, "theories of disease assign to the luckless ill the ultimate responsibility both for falling ill and for getting well" (p. 57). Stigma, therefore, may be fueled additionally by blame or causes attributed to depression. The literature suggests that, when individuals characterize the mentally ill as personally responsible for their affliction, then they are less compassionate and less accepting of them (Valkenburg, Semetko & De Vreese, 1999).

Stigmatized coverage would therefore "blame the victim."

Solutions. News stories that embrace controversy or threats often contain a solution. Some suggested this is to reassure publics by "normalizing" threats in order to protect communities (Donohue, Olien & Tichenor, 1989; Fredin & Kosicki, 1989). Bennett (1980) described this process as normalizing the news, meaning, no matter what the crisis, the journalist will "nearly always return the situation to normal by the end of the story." Solutions, Nelkin asserted, reside under the purview of scientists, and their perspectives largely go unchallenged. Similarly, we would expect to find in news coverage of mental health that scientific experts are legitimate but unquestioned voices in setting the parameters for the discussion of depression, and that they are empowered to chart the solutions to mental illness.

Source use. Choosing which sources to use in news coverage is an accoutrement of the news package, and some argue that sources help shape the news agenda (Gitlin, 1980; Herman & Chomsky, 1988). The underlying assumption is that readers adopt the slant delivered by the source—and that sources have their own biases. In science coverage, bias leans toward scientific, rather than social system perspectives, and scientists typically are quoted without challenge (Nelkin, 1987). In coverage of depression, we would expect members of the medical and scientific communities to comprise the bulk of sources used.

Exogenous Influences

Advertising

The role of advertisers in shaping and censoring news has been the subject of much discussion. In their book *Manufacturing Consent,* Edward S. Herman and Noam Chomsky (1988) argued that advertisers bring pressure to bear on editors and reporters, whether direct or subtle, resulting in self-censorship of news or retooling of news to assuage the advertiser. Others have argued that newspaper editors face pressures from advertisers on an ongoing basis (Donohue, Olien & Tichenor, 1989; Soley & Craig, 1992). Concrete examples included: advertisers pulling their accounts from media organizations after reading unfavorable coverage (Lacher & Rotfeld, 1994); advertisers requiring media to eschew editorial (news) content that ad agencies find offensive; and requests to review editorial copy before publication (Shelton & Curtis, 1998). In one survey of newspaper editors, 84% said advertisers had attempted to influence news, and 70% said advertisers had tried to kill stories (Soley & Craig, 1992).

Indeed, advertisers, marketers and public relations practitioners find methods to massage the message in news. This also holds true for pharmaceutical organizations promoting drugs for mental illness. News copy is "more compelling" than an ad, according to a 1998 article in *Pharmaceutical Executive* that gives pointers on how marketers can best promote their products (Levins & Rodgers, 1998). The authors suggest placing stories in local press in order to "drive sales." One way to attract news is to "promote a problem your product can solve." In other words, a marketer who sells antifungal cream should be able to engender news stories about the heartbreak of toe fungus. And a good marketer should also provide the solution to the problem with mention of the brand name and (positive) value statements about the product.

Pharmaceutical interests. Clearly pharmaceutical companies have a vested interest in the social construction of depression. This is particularly true in light of the introduction of new antidepressant medications, specifically the class of SSRI drugs--selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors—which include heavily advertised brands such as Prozac and Paxil. The SSRI medications have been regaled because side effects are reportedly much less severe than earlier antidepressant medications.

Coincident to the advent of new drugs is the explosion of direct-to-consumer (DTC) advertising, which has grown exponentially since the FDA lifted the moratorium on advertising to consumers in 1985. Overall spending on DTC ads grew nine-fold from $55 million in 1991 to $516 million in 1996, and then doubled the following year from $516 million to $1 billion. Such advertising now brings prescription drug pitches directly to the consumer, whereas, prior to the mid-1990s, such pitches were channeled directly to healthcare professionals. As a result, consumers are arguably more familiar with antidepressant medications as well as such afflictions as panic disorders, obsessive-compulsive behavior and clinical depression. Moreover, television viewers and magazine readers are led to believe they can find solutions to these problems in pill form.

Thus, manufacturers of such drugs are keenly aware of the social construction of mental illness and its solutions, and have a stake in defining depression within a medical disease model. That is, if depression is a chemical imbalance, taking SSRI pills will restore that balance. But not all scientists agree. While some drugs may lift sadness they cannot solve the issues that brought on depression in the first place. Frank (1999) wrote, "although many individual depressive episodes can be temporarily 'fixed' by antidepressants, the drugs are not curative, no more than insulin cures diabetes...the demon always returns at some point."

Our expectation is that coverage would include in its solutions the SSRI medications, which would be seen as groundbreaking new therapies.

Framing

We turn our attention to the social construction of phenomena in news coverage with an examination of framing and metaphor, borrowing liberally from scholars who have conceptualized framing as central organizing ideas that undergird news accounts. Framing by definition incorporates news routines as well as exogenous variables such as advertisers' influence. In his treatise on coverage of the Vietnam War protests, Todd Gitlin (1980) characterized framing as "core principles of selection, exclusion and valuation" (p. 23). From this perspective, framing includes how news ideas are generated, where information is gleaned, which sources are quoted, which issues get spotlighted, and how explanations and descriptions unfold (Gamson & Modigliani, 1989; Gitlin, 1980; Hartley, 1989; Iyengar, 1990; Kinder & Sanders, 1990; Luke, 1987; Ryan, 1991). Many writers suggested that framing reveals underlying values and ideologies of those with the power to name and define phenomena. Reese (1990) noted that media "accept the frames imposed on events by officials and marginalize and delegitimate voices that fall outside the dominant elite circles...the media establish what is normal and deviant by the way they portray people and ideas" (pp. 394-395).

Metaphors and frames are interlocked, and the use of metaphors in framing can reveal underlying meanings, as well as provide the implied solution to problems. For example, if society is a machine, then you need a trained engineer to run it (Gozzi, 1999). Similarly, if illness is constructed in a medical disease model, you need medical technicians and treatments to cure it.

The Medical Disease Model

Others have argued that if mental illness is framed as a medical disease construct, then the public will have greater tolerance for the mentally ill: "If only the public could be persuaded mental illness is like any other illness, just as diabetes is a disorder of the pancreas" (Read & Law, 1999).

Thomas Szasz (2000) has been an outspoken critic of the medical disease model in mental health, arguing, "diseases of the mind are not diseases of the brain." He also noted that the social construction of mental illness as a disease, like the construction of alcoholism as "chemical dependence," allows the illness to be legitimized as outside the individual's control. And while the model may indeed lift some of the onus of blame from the individual to her or his brain, Wahl maintained that the model is an invented reality, a construction created in part by those with a vested interest in how the terms are defined.

Others have argued that the medical disease model emphasizes pathology, which results in concentration on the symptoms of disease--not necessarily the causes—and thus placing the clinician in the role of expert. Davis & Jansen (1998) noted that most illnesses can be defined in terms of biochemistry, and even love has a chemical explanation (Neuhaus, 1993). Such scholars emphasize that, by focusing on disease, we lose sight of its social context.

Thus we would expect the medical disease model to permeate coverage of depression.

Metaphors

Metaphors effectively convey meaning by loading multiple meanings into one phrase. For example, in a study of the coverage of an environmental controversy Coleman (1994) found that the metaphors used to describe protesters included "outsiders" who would "lead us back to the Stone Age," while proponents in the controversy were labeled "partners in progress." Each metaphor deftly conveyed myriad meanings with negative and positive valences. And such metaphors equip readers with the cues necessary to make sense of narratives (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980).

War. Nelkin noted that metaphors in science include the imagery of war. By equating science and medicine with war, experts are not "questioned, new technologies must go forward, and limits are inappropriate" (p. 81). Thus, the spectrum of meaning for the word "war" covers a vast territory, including such concepts as victors and losers, heroes and villains, gods and devils. The war metaphor frequently appears in medical constructions. Doctors, scientists and researchers are described as militia whose job is to wipe out, destroy and kill invading viruses, bacteria and diseases. For example, in media coverage of the

Ebola virus, war metaphors pervaded the discourse, with the bug described as stalker and predictor, sufferers as victims, and physicians as heroes (Ungar, 1998; Weldon, 2001). In a similar vein, we would expect coverage of depression to include war metaphors, and that solution frames would emphasize the efficacy of medical treatments over all others.

To summarize, we have asserted that the social construction of depression is determined (in part) by news routines, exogenous variables such as advertising influence, and by framing. We now turn to our hypotheses.

Research Question and Hypotheses

To recap, we believe that examining the social construction of depression in news will reveal the shape of stigma.[7]

News Routines

Hypothesis 1. News stories on depression will vary from official constructions of depression by focusing a substantively significant portion of coverage on violence.

Hypothesis 2. On balance, depressed individuals will be deligitimized with derogatory mentions or labels, thus indicating they are abnormal.

Hypothesis 3. News reports about depression will significantly reflect the personalization bias by focusing on individuals.

Hypothesis 4. The generalizing portrayal will be incorporated into personalized news stories about depression.

Hypothesis 5. When causes for depression are noted, individuals will be mentioned as responsible for their illness significantly more frequently than other causal factors.

Hypothesis 6. News stories about depressed individuals will incorporate solution frames.

Hypothesis 7. The majority of sources quoted in stories about depression will be significantly more likely to include medical and scientific personnel.

Exogenous Variables

Hypothesis 8. When treatments or cures for depression are discussed, prescription medication will be significantly more likely than other treatments to be recommended.

Hypothesis 9. When medication for depression is mentioned, best-selling SSRI brands will be most likely to be named.

Hypothesis 10. Depression will be defined as a chemical imbalance or brain-related problem.

Framing

Hypothesis 11. Coverage of depression will employ the medical disease model frame when describing the illness.

Hypothesis 12. Coverage of depression will employ war frames when describing the illness.

Methods

A 14-month time frame of August 1, 1999 to October 1, 2000 was chosen to sample news coverage concerning depression, using the Lexis-Nexis database of daily newspapers in the United States.

The first foray into Lexis-Nexis revealed thousands of articles that contained the word "depression." A close examination revealed that many of the stories focused on the economy or weather, and others were not relevant to clinical depression. By limiting the pool of stories to the term "depression" and the root "depress" we reasoned that the stories would be more likely to have depression as its central theme.[8]

A total of 640 news stories with the term "depression" and "depress" were found in the time frame. In the spirit of parsimony, and in order to achieve a confidence level of 95%, a sample size of 70 to 85 would be necessary for sufficient reliability. To ensure an adequate sample size we selected 110 stories using a random, blind method[9]. Of the 110 stories chosen, 37 were deemed irrelevant: some simply did not focus on clinical depression, while others were columns, letters or opinion pieces. As a result, 72 news stories passed muster. Using a confidence level of 95%, the sample size of 72 yielded a confidence interval of 11.

Two researchers devised the coding scheme in order to answer basic questions about the stories—the newspaper name and size, date, story length, etc.—and to address the research questions and hypotheses. Questions explored both manifest and latent content. Whenever possible coding was designed to create independent, rather than overlapping categories. Two individuals met twice after separate coding trials to compare answers and discuss areas that resulted in disagreement. Each researcher independently read and coded the news articles.

Intercoder Reliability

A random sample of three stories was chosen to check intercoder reliability. Coding fell into five categories: dichotomous variables (66% of all coding), three-way variables (11%), four-way variables (6%), seven-way variables (5%), and variables with 15 categories (11%). Observed and expected agreements were calculated for each category. Intercoder reliability, which was averaged and weighted across the five categories, was .83, and judged as acceptable.

Operationalizations of Terms[10]

Coders first decided whether or not depression was central to each story. Coders counted whether and how often the following terms were included in news stories and headlines: depression (and related terms such as melancholy, mania, sadness, etc.); technical classifications of mental disorders (bipolar, schizophrenia, etc.); mentions of sane, normal or healthy, and derogatory mentions of mental illness (crazy, nutty, wacko, etc.). Coders noted whether and how often mentions were made about violence, suicide, alcohol drinking, illicit drug abuse, stress, hormones, chemical imbalance and sexual abuse in relation to depression.

Treatment categories included whether prescription drugs were mentioned as therapy for depression; whether specific antidepressant brand names were mentioned; whether therapeutic counseling was mentioned; whether a combination of medication and counseling was mentioned; and whether alternative treatments were mentioned (exercise, herbal remedies, etc.).

Fifteen categories were selected based on information gleaned from government publications and the literature as primary causes of depression, and coders noted which cause (or "no cause") best fit each story.[11] Coders also noted whether a secondary blame was mentioned and categorized it.

Stories were coded to reflect whether the primary subjects were men, women, both or neither. Coders also noted whether the stories focused on adults, elderly, children or teens, some combination of the above, or no group. A note was made if the story featured celebrities and whether stories referred to any individual or groups being "at risk" for depression.

Story Issues

Coders noted whether and how often references about depression were made to public policy (legislation, political agendas, regulations, etc.), and whether references were made to pharmaceutical issues, such as marketing, advertising, drug trends, etc. Mentions of specific scientific studies were noted, along with whether quantitative data were mentioned. Coders noted total number of personalized accounts was noted. Name, title, gender and affiliation were noted for all individual sources (not institutions) named in stories.

Frames and Metaphors

Coders noted the type of frames and metaphors that described depression or mental illness. Coders looked for the following specific frames: solution-resolution; anti-solution or hopeless; war; peace; scientific progress; anti-progress; medical-disease model; non-disease or anti-disease; pill culture; and anti-pill or alternative health care. A notation was made if the frame incorporated another frame and thus overlapped.

Findings

Although efforts were made to obtain a representative regional sample of newspapers, a greater number of stories was selected (randomly) from the west: 38%; with 25% from the south; 19% from the north; and 15% from the Midwest. Circulation size of newspapers ranged from 18,000 to 1,086,000. About 17% of stories were attributed to a wire service, with the remainder written by staff or unidentified writers.

The majority of stories were from the news section of the paper (42%). Stories also appeared in the health (13%) and lifestyle or entertainment areas (11%). Other articles appeared in miscellaneous sections (10%) or in sports (6%). The remaining were unidentified.

While the lion's share of stories was carried in section A (21%) and B (17%), stories also appeared in sections D, E, F, I, L and S. The majority of stories were on page 1 (29%) and page 2 (10%) of the section, with the remaining on pages 3 through 48. The average story length was 783 words (s.d.=500) with a range from 97 to 2,436 words.

The majority of depression stories ran on Sunday (22%), followed by Tuesday (18%), Monday (17%) and Wednesday (15%) with the remaining on Thursday and Saturday (8% each), Friday (7%), or unknown.

Nearly three-quarters (71%) of the stories focused on specific age groups, with adults being the most frequently described group (50%). About 10% of the stories concentrated on teens or children, while 11% of the stories concerned the elderly. Another 10% included a combination of age-types, and the remaining 19% concerned no particular group.

Many stories focused on women--about 24%--while 17% concerned men only. Another quarter (26%) focused on men and women (in the same story), while the remaining 33% concerned neither.

About 11% of the stories contained a depression checklist for readers, 25% had a referral telephone number, 13% gave an address, and 11% had an email address or website listed.

Routines

Stigma and Definitions. Recall our contention that stigmatized coverage of depression would vary from the definitions of conventional mental health stakeholders, and that stigmatized coverage would equate depression with violence while delegitimating those with depression.

Suicide was mentioned in relationship to depression in 47%[12] of all stories while 21% of all stories mentioned violence. Another 21% mentioned stress, and 21% mentioned brain or chemical imbalance as relevant to depression. Alcohol was mentioned in 19% of stories, as was drug abuse (18%). Hormones were mentioned in 14% of stories and a relationship was mentioned in 13%.

Violence was a common theme, occurring in one story out of every five, and suicide—which occurred in almost half of all stories—and is also arguably a violent act, and thus Hypothesis 1 is supported. Violence mentions did covary with suicide mentions: about 21% of stories that carried such mentions contained both suicide and violence.

Some violence mentions concerned harming others *(italics added):*

> Kathleen Amper's remoteness got so bad that hospital personnel thought she was purposely trying to *hurt her infant son*...at the extreme, some patients neglect their baby, some *deliberately harm it*. Others commit suicide. (Whitely, 2000)

Other mentions linked depression with violent thoughts, and in this example, the subject threatened to kill his classmates:

> He spoke of being depressed. "I don't see me having a very happy life," he said. "I'm not happy now"...eight pages [of a diary] of rambling teen angst adorned with swastikas..."I hate people so much *I would be willing to kill them*." (Pacenti, 2000)

Other references to violence showed its causal relationship to depression:

> The study's findings offer further confirmation that traumatic experiences can have a profound effect on brain chemistry...A history of *childhood abuse*, studies have shown, puts people at higher risk for developing depression. (Goode, 2000).

Deviant or derogatory mentions were indeed mentioned in 18% of stories, in support Hypothesis 2. Such mentions illustrated deviance by highlighting the abnormal qualities of depression:

> Karyn Bates is *not your ordinary* board chairwoman. But this is not your ordinary board. (Ventura County (California) Mental Health

> Board)...During severe bouts of mania, she rarely slept and *did bizarre things.* She recalls once walking into heavy traffic, stopping a shocked driver and asking for a cigarette. She stole food and cigarettes and *ended up in jail.* (Johnson, 1999, October 10, p. B-1)

Many of those interviewed talked about disparaging attitudes:

> "It's like *mental illnesses are inherently wrong,*" she said. "You'll never find a get-well card that says, 'Glad you're on anti-depressants. Hope things are going well'...you don't want something like that to be wrong with you because it's so taboo...you don't want people to say *you're a nutjob"*...some people think emotional problems are just signs that they need to *quit being a whiner.* (Forster, 1999)

Personalization. Recall we also hypothesized that stories would incorporate the personalization bias by focusing on individual attributes of depression. About 45% of all stories included personalization, where at least one depressed individual was described at length, which supports Hypothesis 3. We also predicted that the generalizing portrayal would be incorporated into personalized stories about depression. About 40% of such stories specifically detailed quantitative data as background to the individual featured, in support of Hypothesis 4. In the following example, the article begins with one individual, and then fans out to incorporate statistics about the disease's effects--an illustration of the generalizing portrayal:

> Fourteen-year-old Stephanie (not her real name) used colored markers and white paper to draw a stick-figure image of herself being pushed off a cliff. (Hernandez, 2000)

Later the story takes on general facts:

> As many as *one in 33* children suffer from depression, according to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. *Up to 3 million* young people are estimated to suffer from a form of mental illness.

Blame. Turning to causes of depression, stories were more likely to attribute depression to personal-level factors rather than societal factors.

Indeed, societal factors were mentioned as the primary cause of depression in only 4% of stories. Turning to the list[13] of depression's primary cause (not mere mentions), "no blame" was found in 25% of stories, followed by blame to "self" (22%). The third most mentioned cause was chemical-brain imbalance (11%). The following categories all gleaned less than 5% of causal attributions: pregnancy or hormones, family, other disease or disability, someone else (not family or spouse), aging, work, or genetics. When comparing "no blame" to "self" blame, the difference was statistically significant when examining the Pearson chi-square statistic: p=.009. Using the Spearman correlation statistic for ordinal by ordinal measure was also significant: p=.008. This supports Hypothesis 5, that causal attributions to self are significantly different from "no blame."

> Following is an example of a story that placed blame on "self": Struggling with a sense of hopelessness and loss, Massing had grown far from the sturdy survivor that he had always been. Massing nearly did *shut himself off from others*...finally realizing he could not extricate himself from his depression on his own. (Oppermann, 2000)

Societal values, while rarely mentioned, demonstrated coverage from a cultural rather than personal bias:

> In the survey, obese women were 37% more likely than women of average weight to have clinical depression in the past year. But obese men were 37% less likely than normal-weight men to suffer depression or to attempt suicide. "An overweight woman is so *at odds with what's acceptable in this society*, but our *culture values* muscular, powerful-looking males. It's the frail man who's at odds with *society's ideal.*" ("Obese women more likely," 2000)

Solutions. Solutions to depression were best captured as story frames, in view that mentions alone may not adequately depict a solution. Solution frames occurred in half (51%) of all stories, followed by war (29%) then disease frames (15%). This finding supports Hypothesis 6.

The following examples illustrate Bennett's (1988) normalizing routine in which solution packages neatly wrapped up depression's cures:

> The problem got so bad in 1995, he agreed to meet with doctors suggested by the Sonics, was subsequently diagnosed with clinical depression, took his prescribed medicine, quit playing for two weeks *and got better.* (Newnham, 2000)

A positive spin shows another solution frame:

> The *happy part* of the postpartum depression story is that, like any other depressive episode, it is largely treatable. And generally the treatment is the same: drugs and talk therapy...Seven months after the turmoil began, Ann thinks she has largely regained her equilibrium...She has stopped all of her medication and *feels very much like her old self.* (Uhlenhutch, 1999)

Sources. We also hypothesized that the majority of sources quoted in depression stories would be medical and scientific personnel. We found that of all the sources[14] (182 total) quoted in all stories, 22% were counselors, psychologists or psychiatrists. Scientists, researchers and academics represented 16% of all sources, while health care workers, physicians and nurses comprised 13%. In all, 51 percent of the sources were from the medical or scientific community, in support of Hypothesis 7. Other sources included the depressed individual (22%) while family members made up 8%. Friends, neighbors and witnesses comprised 7%, law enforcement personnel comprised another 7%, elected or appointed officials 6% and legal representatives such as attorneys, 4%.

Exogenous Variables

The next set of hypotheses concerned drug therapy. Some type of therapy was noted in 65% of all stories, and among those stories, prescription drugs were mentioned twice as often as any other therapy--72% of the time, in support of Hypothesis 8. Other therapy mentions included counseling (36%), alternative treatments (28%) and drug-counseling therapy combined (12%).[15]

Turning to brand names, specific drugs—like Prozac—were mentioned in only 15% of stories that included some type of drug treatment. However, when brands were mentioned, they tended to be the best sellers (in order of mentions): Prozac, Wellbutrin and Buproprion (the chemical name for Wellbutrin), Zoloft and Serzone (the chemical name for Zoloft), Paxil and Paroxetin (the chemical name for Paxil), Risperdal, Celexa, Xanax and Lithium (the chemical name for Eskalith). The most frequently mentioned brand—Prozac—is the top-selling antidepressant and ranked the fourth overall as the best-selling drug in retail sales in 2000[16]. The other brand names mentioned (in order) are ranked among the top 100 in all drugs sales as follows: Wellbutrin (ranked 22), Zoloft (7), Serzone (72), Paxil (8), Risperdal (21), Celexa (22), and Xanax (159). Lithium was ranked in another category—the top 200 best-selling generic drugs (rank of 115)[17]. This finding offers support for Hypothesis 9: of the nine drugs mentioned, six were in the top 25 of all drug sales, and two were in the top 160.

Part of the pharmaceutical message concerning antidepressants is that the drugs offset the chemical imbalance of depression, and as such, we expected that depression would be defined in news copy as a chemical imbalance. Overall we examined both mentions, and the medical disease model frame.

Mere mentions of chemical imbalances occurred in 21% of all stories, contrary to Hypothesis 10.

Typical brain chemistry mentions were described as follows:

> Researchers now know that the disorder reflects a *chemical imbalance* in the brain as well as a deficiency of certain salts in the blood. Treatment involves restoring the balance. (Groves, 2000)

> A mutant suicide gene that affects *brain chemistry* in unknown ways may drive some depressed people to kill themselves, report Canadian psychiatric researchers who have studied the brain for 10 years. (Ferraro, 2000)

Similarly we examined how the medical disease model—which incorporates the chemical imbalance definition--was framed.

Frames

Like solutions, the medical disease model was best captured as a story frame since mere mentions failed to explicate the disease model's attributes. Disease frames were located in 15% of stories, lending support to Hypothesis 11.

Disease frames tended to describe depression "like any other disease." Some similes described depression as akin to diabetes, high blood pressure, heart disease or a broken leg. One patient noted:

> She says the key to her improvement in the last couple of years has been her medication. Without it, "I would have been dead years ago," she says. "My meds are definitely what keeps me alive, *like insulin helps a diabetic...*Depression's really rotten...It's an *actual disease* and it strikes and you don't know why it strikes." (Borsuk, 1999)

And:

> Rebecca was depressed, not feeling down for a day or two every once in awhile, but suffering from a *chemical imbalance* in her brain. She is feeling better, *now that she is taking medication.* (Forster, 1999)

War frames were found in 19% of all stories, lending credence to the notion that medicine is often described in militia-type terms, and supporting Hypothesis 12. Such stories were laced with battle metaphors, and articles used such words as arsenal, bout, fight, cavalry, combat and war. For example:

> Treatment includes a lot of medication and treatment—*round after round*, just about everything in the *arsenal*. (Borsuk, 1999)

And:

> But depression, it seems is a *foe that can be beaten* or at least knocked into the ropes...the problem...is to recognize the *opponent* and take the *enemy* seriously. (Stevens, 2000)

Note that some metaphors did overlap. In the following example, a medical disease model frame meshes with a war ("fight") and policy metaphor:

> Many people don't understand that mental illnesses have a biological basis and can be treated with medication, just as, say, someone with high blood pressure takes pills...advocates said they would use the report to fight for equal health insurance coverage ("Mentally ill mostly untreated," 1999).

Discussion

Our contribution

Why study depression coverage? One reason is that people often learn about health issues from mass media, whether or not they are purposefully seeking information, and we should therefore pay attention to the construction of mental illness in media accounts. You don't need to be depressed to know Prozac has been heralded as a groundbreaking drug. Similarly, you don't need to be depressed to believe there is a sense of shame and deviance associated with depression, as there certainly is with any mental illness. While some scholars might blanch at the analogy, we argue that if mental illness were a crime, then depression would be the misdemeanor to schizophrenia's felony[18]. And when depression is framed as a type of mental illness, the stigma is carried along with the definition.

Our analysis of news coverage reveals that references to depression are not overtly biased—individuals are saved from labels like lunatic or wacko in print. But mentions of violence—harm to self and harm to others—did occur in tandem with stories about depression. Such stories may reinforce mental health advocates' long-standing criticism wrought by entertainment media and tabloid newspaper portrayals that equate mental illness with violence. The link we found with violence may be a function of the newsworthiness of the story—such as the woman who drove her car into a lake, killing her daughter. The story is not so much about depression as it is coverage of infanticide. What makes stories newsworthy—like crime and violence—may be the very driving force that results in newspapers' delegitimization of depression.

We also argue that the frames used in coverage of depression may enable stigma and stereotypes to occur. For example, personalization of news, by its very nature, places the individual at the heart of the story, directing the reader's attention to the person, rather than the community. And while the prevailing assumption is that the personalization technique—putting a human face on a story—makes the story more compelling to readers, some studies reveal the opposite--that personalization reduces, rather than increases sympathy for the mentally ill (Valkenburg, Semetko & De Vreese, 1999). Moreover, by focusing on individuals rather than social systems, both cause and cure take on individual features. And we argue that there is indeed a cultural context of depression that plays an underreported role. The notion of the brain as the site of depression implies, by default, that the cure is a pill that restores chemical balance. Moreover, readers and viewers are reminded of the cure with every antidepressant advertisement. Yet there are myriad critics who argue that depression's causes occupy a continuum, and that only some depression is the result of brain chemistry, and therefore antidepressant drugs are not always the most prudent therapy choice.

The construction of depression in news stories includes solution frames, another common journalistic routine. The solution frame suggests that depression is best solved by taking medication. Yet organizations like the APA, NAMI and NIMH agree that drug therapy should be combined with counseling therapy, and point to clinical trials that demonstrate the efficacy of the combined therapies. One explanation—which has yet to be demonstrated unequivocally—is that the attention to drug therapy in popular press is the result of aggressive marketing on the part of pharmaceutical companies, which place news stories in popular media that extol the virtues of SSRI drugs. Moreover, the solution frame, when combined with the medical disease model, suggests that drugs are the preferred method for treating the disease of depression.

We also found that war frames permeate coverage of depression, playing out a narrative where the individual becomes engaged in battle with herself or himself. The war takes on an additional metaphor of the struggle over light and dark: individuals with depression sink and fall into metaphorical abysses, holes and pits. Depression is heavy, dark and burdensome. And our culture equates the dark with evil. It's a short distance, then, from being dark to being evil. And the natural conclusion is that depression is evil, offering another opportunity for delegitimation.

But perhaps the greatest disservice is placement of the burden on the individual with relatively rare acknowledgement of the role of the community and culture in mental illness. Moreover, the structure and routine of newsgathering and coverage parallel and reflect the western values of individualism and bootstrap mentality of solving one's own problems. In addition, the characterization of mental illness as a function of brain chemistry within a disease framework places the solution squarely on medication. But medication alone rarely solves the core forces that brought on depression in the first place. Alteration in brain chemistry often results from factors that engendered depression: stress from trauma or profound life changes, or low self-worth created by perceptions based on societal expectations. The act of taking medication does not change the trauma or perceived expectations. But in the journalist's quest to bring about solutions in news stories, the larger social issues tend to be ignored.

On a more positive note, we found that news coverage spotlights some issues that warrant additional attention—the effect of depression on youth, the elderly and on men in general. Many stories concerned youth and the elderly, who are at greater than average risk for both depression and suicide. And a number of stories specifically focused on men, whose depression, critics say, has been underreported and under-discussed.

Limitations

We examined a rather brief period of news coverage, and a lengthier time frame would undoubtedly expand our understanding of how depression is constructed. Moreover, it would be useful to compare coverage before and after introduction of the SSRI antidepressants.

Another limitation is the sheer volume—or lack of volume—of news stories. Our sample may not be representative of the total population of depression news stories. Although we use techniques to ensure reliability and validity, the sample of news stories may not behave like a sample of say, voters. The assumption of probability is that, like randomly chosen voters, each news story represents ten others just like it. Such an assumption may prove problematic in content analysis studies like ours. We argue that substantive—

rather than statistical—significance is more appropriate in this case, because data to not behave in the manner assumed for multivariate and linear statistical models. It may be unwise, therefore, to place great confidence when generalizing these stories to the entire population of depression stories.

Readers should be mindful that such stories might not necessarily reflect public opinion, and should refrain from making assumptions about audience response to such stories based only on our examination of coverage. We do assert, however, that news construction reflects values and interests driven by a number of factors, from routines embedded in the manufacture of news, to social constructions articulated and managed by special interest groups ranging from professional organizations to pharmaceutical companies.

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[1] http://www.nimh.nih.gov/publicat/depeffect.cfm

[2] In our study, APA refers to the American Psychiatric Association

[3] http://www.psych.org/public_info/overview.cfm "Mental Illness: An Overview

[4] http://www.psyweb.com/Mdisord/DSM_UV/dsm_iv.html

[5] http://www.nami.org/illness/whatis.html "What is Mental Illness?"

[6] http://www.nimh.nih.gov/publicat/invisible.cfm

[7] Significance refers to substantive significance unless indicated otherwise

[8] A test of five articles culled randomly with the key word "depression" resulted in only two relevant stories. A separate test was run with the words "depression" and "depress" and all five articles were found to be relevant.

[9] Each of the 640 story headlines was printed and cut into strips that were tossed into a straw hat. A blindfolded volunteer selected one piece of paper at a time and the hat was shaken after each selection. A total of 110 headlines slips was pulled from the hat.

[10] Unless noted, all categories were independent

[11] Categories were independent, and included: no blame, self, family, someone else, disease or disability, trauma, hormones or menopause, puberty, aging, pregnancy or post-partum, work stress, chemical imbalance, society, genetics, religion, and other.

[12] Totals exceed 100% because a story may contain more than one mention of terms such as brain, chemistry, violence, stress, etc., as related—not necessarily the cause—of depression.

[13] Items were independent

[14] Sources, even if quoted repeatedly, were counted in stories once only

[15] This is an independent category, meaning; it was not double-coded with the other therapy variables.

[16] Top 200 prescription drugs by retail sales in 2000, Scott-Levin's Source Prescription Audit, in http://dt.pdr.net/dt/public.htm?path=content/journals/d/data/2001/0319/dsrtop20003b.html

[17] Lithium, the chemical name for Eskalith, is ranked 115 in the list of generic drugs. Eskalith is not ranked in the top 200 brand name list

[18] David Sillars made this analogy

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Newspaper

Running Head: 'Still Shocking, But No Longer Surprising'

'Still Shocking, But No Longer Surprising':

The Anomaly Paradox in Newspaper Coverage of the 1997-1998 School Shootings

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'Still Shocking, But No Longer Surprising':

The Anomaly Paradox in Newspaper Coverage of the 1997-1998 School Shootings

Abstract

The shootings at schools in Pearl, Mississippi, West Paducah, Kentucky, Jonesboro, Arkansas, Edinboro, Pennsylvania, and Springfield, Oregon, were sensational crimes in their own right. The fact that they occurred in small towns within a single academic year lent further impetus to their treatment as 'what-a-stories.' This paper brings together Tuchman's concept of the 'what-a-story,' Fishman's sketch of the 'crime wave dynamic' and Gans' identification of small-town pastoralism and social order as 'enduring values in the news' in accounting for similarities among newspaper stories about the five 1997-98 school shootings. The juxtaposition of Tuchman and Fishman sheds further light on one of the fundamental paradoxes of journalism: A series of similarly anomalous events is considered more anomalous than a single anomalous event.

KEY WORDS: Newspapers, Crime Waves, What-a-Story, Typifications, News Values

'Still Shocking, But No Longer Surprising':

The Anomaly Paradox in Newspaper Coverage of the 1997-1998 School Shootings

Studies of 'the manufacture of news' (e.g., Tuchman, 1978; Gans, 1980; Fishman, 1981; Cohen & Young, 1981; Berkowitz, 1999) take uniformity as a given – different stories about the same or similar occurrences will evince similarities in structure, style and theme – and work back through the manufacturing process to account for the uniformity. Rejecting journalists' claims that these similarities constitute 'proof' of their objectivity, these studies rest on three assumptions:

1. News organizations are stakeholders in the status quo.
2. Editors are attracted to occurrences that threaten the status quo.
3. Editors are likelier to recognize an occurrence as a threat to the status quo to the extent that it resembles threats to the status quo that the news organization has covered in the past.
4. Reporters tend to rely on official sources when reporting on threats to the status quo.
5. As a genre, news writing imposes a set of constraints on reporters' choices of structure, style and language.

The first three assumptions account for consistency of news judgment among assigning editors. The fourth and fifth assumptions accounts for consistency in the information obtained and the presentation of that information by reporters assigned to the same or similar stories. In this article I would like to test the applicability of these five assumptions to a selection of newspaper stories about reactions to the succession of shootings at suburban and small-town schools during the 1997-98 academic year. I would specifically like to see how well Tuchman's (1978) notion of the 'what-a-story' and Fishman's (1981) sketch of 'the crime wave dynamic' can account for similarities among school shooting stories – and how well Gans' (1980) conceptualizations of 'small-town pastoralism' and 'social order' as enduring values in the news account for the school shootings receiving the what-a-story and crime-wave treatments. Finally, I would like to comment on what I see as an over-emphasis of the role of official sources and an under-appreciation of the dynamics of storytelling in discussions of the manufacture of news.

Data and method

Newspaper stories cited in this article were selected in the following manner: Beginning chronologically, I searched the Nexis newspaper database for 10 days' worth of coverage of each of five school shootings that occurred during the 1997-98 academic year, beginning with the date of the occurrence. The idea of using the 1997-98 school year as a frame suggested itself when I read New York Times reporter Rick Bragg's (1998b) story about the shootings in Springfield, Oregon:

> Since the doors of the first yellow school bus swung open at the first morning stop last fall, at least a dozen students and two teachers have been slain by schoolmates around the country, in lunchrooms, in schoolyards, at morning prayers.

The advantages of thus limiting the discussion are that it focuses on the incidents that occurred closest together in time; it bypasses the enormous corpus of stories about the massacre at Columbine High School; and it separates the relatively high-casualty events of 1997-98 from the less-sensational shootings of 1996 and 1999. The shootings at schools in Bethel, Alaska (two dead, two wounded), Conyers, Georgia (six wounded), Deming, New Mexico, (one dead), and Fort Gibson, Oklahoma (four wounded) seem to occupy a sort of second tier of school shootings compared to the incidents at Pearl, Mississippi (two dead, seven wounded), West Paducah, Kentucky (three dead, five wounded), Jonesboro, Arkansas (five dead, 10 wounded), Springfield, Oregon (two dead, 24 wounded), and Littleton, Colorado (15 dead, 23 wounded).

By this grim standard, the shootings in Edinboro, Pennsylvania (one dead, three injured) have more in common with the 1999 shootings. I include the Edinboro shootings simply because of when they occurred and because, as we shall see, the incident gave the lie to speculation that school shootings were a uniquely southern phenomenon. I have left out coverage of a school shooting in Fayetteville, Tennessee (one dead), on May 19, 1998, on the other hand, because it lacked the randomness of the other incidents -- the victim was dating the suspect's ex-girlfriend – and therefore did not receive as much coverage as the others. My Nexis search for Fayetteville stories generated only briefs or stories about the Springfield shootings that mention the Fayetteville shooting, which had occurred two days earlier. Littleton seemed to raise the newsworthiness bar for subsequent school shootings. The enormity of the events at Columbine High School led newspapers to treat the shootings in Conyers, Deming and Fort Gibson as little more than the aftershocks of a major earthquake. A chart of my Nexis search shows the correlation between coverage and casualties:

Table 1 Coverage of the 1997-98 school shootings

Site	Coverage Dates	Search Results	Wounded	Killed
Pearl, Miss.	Oct. 1-11, 1997	8	7	2
Paducah, Ky.	Dec. 1-11, 1997	64	5	3
Jonesboro, Ark.	March 24-April 3, 1998	509	10	5
Edinboro, Pa.	April 24-May 1, 1998	43	3	1
Springfield, Ore.	May 21-31, 1998	180	24	2

It is important to keep in mind that any Nexis search will turn up briefs, editorials, columns, letters to the editor and often, identical wire service stories and syndicated columns that appeared in multiple newspapers. For the purposes of this study I was only interested in those columns and longer stories (more than 500 words) which a) linked the present incident to previous incidents, b) took up the anomalousness of the incident, or c) discussed possible causes of the incident or the series of incidents. The use of a 10-day time frame for the coverage of each incident follows Berkowitz's (2000: 130) tracing of the arc of the what-a-story from incident, through 'shock at the tragic intervention of fate in our lives,' to the rituals of closure – return to the normal school schedule and memorial services – which typically occur within 10 days of the shooting.

Like Berkowitz (2000), I ground my examination of these stories and columns in a tradition of inquiry that Altheide (1996: 33) calls qualitative document analysis, 'the major emphasis [of which is] to capture the meanings, emphases, and themes of messages…' The technique is similar to that of folklorists and anthropologists who analyze the poetics of folk narrative (e.g., Hymes 1981). Just as recurrent themes in tales point the way to abiding cultural concerns, recurrent themes in news stories direct us to abiding news values.

It is worth noting that there is an emic dimension to performing Nexis searches insofar as it replicates the searches that the reporters themselves would typically perform. When we recognize similarities among newspaper stories we are not just seeing professional newsgathering and news-writing routines independently yielding similar stories; we are seeing the overt influence of each story on every subsequent story.

School shootings and news values

Hall et al (1981: 336-337) single out 'an orientation to items which are "out of the ordinary"' as 'the primary or cardinal news value.' At the same time, they note that the journalist's job is not merely to offer the audience 'a jumble of random or chaotic events,' but to make sense of those events, to 'bring them within the horizon of the "meaningful."'

Sense-making begins with a process Tuchman (1978) calls 'typification.' An assigning editor discerns a resemblance between the anomalous occurrence at hand, and others the newsroom has covered in the past. The strategies that were used in covering the previous stories are then deployed to cover the new story. Tuchman (1978: 62) shows how even a 'what-a-story' (I would substitute the less awkward term 'blockbuster,' which I have heard in newsrooms where I have worked) like President Johnson's surprise announcement that he would not seek re-election in 1968 will be 'typified and thus made routine.'

Fishman's (1981: 102) study of crime waves delineates a counter-process whereby routine stories are framed as instances of some larger phenomenon. The mugging of an elderly New Yorker becomes more newsworthy when it is seen as 'the latest instance of the continuing trend in crimes against the elderly.' Here is a fundamental journalistic paradox: An incident that, by itself, is not especially anomalous, becomes so when linked to other similar incidents. A wave of crimes against the elderly violates social norms in a way that an isolated crime against an elderly person does not.

A school shooting is inherently more newsworthy than a mugging because it is more violent and will probably involve more witnesses, if not more victims. A perceived wave of school shootings threatens the status quo to the same degree as a wave of crimes against the elderly: A civil society expects to be able to protect its most vulnerable citizens from harm. Parents need to feel confident that they are sending their children to a safe place. Thus, unlike the crimes against the elderly in New York in 1976, the school shootings of 1997-1998 were individually handled as what-a-stories and collectively handled as instances of a crime wave. What is remarkable is that the school shootings began receiving the crime-wave treatment so quickly. Fishman counts 89 stories of crimes against the elderly over a six-month period. In USA TODAY'S account of the shootings at Heath High School in West Paducah – the second in the series – reporter Paul Hoversten (1997) noted that 'the Kentucky shooting came just two months after a bloody rampage at a high school in Pearl, Miss.' The New York Times sounded a cautionary note in a story headlined 'Despite Recent Carnage, School Violence Is Not on the Rise' (Lewin, 1997). The story acknowledges that the shootings in Pearl and West Paducah 'seem to signal a rising tide of school violence,' but cites research by the National School Safety Center showing that less than half as many students had been killed at school in 1997 as in 1993. In the same day's Times, Bragg (1997) raised the issue of whether what happened at Pearl inspired what occurred at West Paducah. But the story goes on to quote a classmate of the boy charged in the shooting who, in Bragg's words, 'doubted any connection.'

Still, the similarities among incidents were too striking to ignore. USA TODAY (1998) hyperbolically characterized the Jonesboro shooting as 'the third mass killing in a public school in the past six months.' Here too, the foregrounding of the connection among incidents is counterbalanced by data showing that 'aside from high-profile horror shows, schools are still safe.' The St. Louis Post-Dispatch took the connection a step further, sending a reporter back to West Paducah to see if the shooting in Jonesboro had 'reopened wounds' (Williams, 1998). Bill Duryea (1998) of the St. Petersburg Times offered driving directions from Paducah to Jonesboro as his way of linking events in the two towns. A month later, in a story about the shootings in Edinboro, it was enough for USA TODAY reporter Rick Hampson (1998) to merely invoke the names 'Jonesboro and Pearl and West Paducah.' No boilerplate copy with the dates and the number dead and wounded from each town was necessary. 'Suddenly,' the paper editorialized a day later, 'a troubling coincidence looks like a terrifying pattern' (USA TODAY, 1998). For a story about the Springfield shootings, Bragg (1998b) interviewed people in Pearl, Paducah and Jonesboro.

The killings, Bragg wrote, seem to be part of 'a new national trend.' Peter Hermann (1998) of the Baltimore Sun called Springfield 'the latest in a series of shootings by students at schools across the nation.' Ellen O'Brien (1998) of the Boston Globe described Springfield as 'a familiar scene to many Americans: Blood-soaked and shell-shocked teenagers leaving schools where their classmates have declared war on them, stunned and confused adults saying they never saw it coming. With five deadly shootings at schools in small towns across the nation in the last 15 months – the latest Thursday in Oregon – the images are still shocking, but no longer surprising to many.'

Burns and Crawford (1999: 155) cite a welter of statistics from the Centers for Disease Control, the National School Safety Center, the National Center for Education

Statistics, the U.S. Department of Education and The Sourcebook of Criminal Justice Statistics to support their argument that the school shootings were 'idiosyncratic events and not part of any recognizable trend.' 'Ironically,' they say, 'the shootings may have received such intense coverage because of the infrequency of these occurrences rather than their frequency.' Crime waves, says Fishman (1981: 100), are really media waves 'that may or may not be related to something happening "on the streets" or in the police crime rates.' Noting that New York Police Department statistics actually showed a slight decrease in crimes against the elderly during the period of the crime wave, Fishman goes on to say that his purpose was not to call attention to the disparity so much as to use the crime wave stories as a window on how news judgments and reporter assignments get made in the newsroom. Once editors have perceived a connection or 'theme' among disparate occurrences, Fishman writes, they are likelier to commit resources to any given instance of the theme. Pearl was the first of the school shootings to receive the what-a-story treatment. Part of what was identified as familiar about the coverage of subsequent shootings was the media invasion:

> For the third time in five months, it happened this way: First, students were inexplicably gunned down at the one place thought to be a sanctuary within the community, the local school. Then, frantic parents made a mad dash for the schoolyard, a frantic media horde hot on their heels. Then, residents reacted with horror, to the media as much as to the shooting. Finally, parents, residents and media all came together and asked why, one of many questions officials couldn't, or wouldn't, answer. (Moehringer, 1998)

The heartland angle

Reporters were quick to note similarities not just among the crimes, but among the settings. The teen who shot up Heath High in West Paducah, wrote USA TODAY's Deborah Sharp (1997), 'joined an exclusive but troubling group: students stalking small-town classmates.' Sharp's story quotes Bill Modzeleski, director of the U.S. Department of Education's Safe and Drug-Free Schools program, who addresses the supposed anomalousness of school violence in rural or suburban or 'heartland' settings: 'It's shocking when it happens in West Paducah, more so than in a Detroit or Los Angeles, because we don't expect it.'

A Kansas City Star story about the Jonesboro shootings begins thus: 'Larry Salinger thought he had left violent crime behind when he moved to Jonesboro, Ark., eight years ago' (Avila, 1998). 'Most of us don't feel something major is going to happen here,' says Salinger, a criminology professor at Arkansas State University. 'But you know what's odd? These things seem to happen at small schools more and more.' Pittsburgh Post-Gazette reporter Jonathan D. Silver (1998) also finds a source who moved to Edinboro 'to escape the crime and violence of New York,' only to discover that ' "kids are dying everywhere."' Here is how an Atlanta Journal-Constitution story about Jonesboro begins:

> It can happen anywhere. And it does.
>
> Long numbed to the violence of the inner city, many Americans still react with shock when violence shatters the serenity of small-town life. (Timms & Drew, 1998; see also Harrop, 1998)

In the Star story, John Devine, director of a safe-schools project at New York University, confirms that kids in suburban and small-town schools are as susceptible to 'drugs, guns and troubled family relationships' as their counterparts in the city. Nevertheless, in story after story, residents say, 'It isn't supposed to happen here' (Bragg, 1998a; see also Williams, 1997a).

From Edinboro, USA TODAY'S Rick Hampson (1998) reports that 'random violence had again stabbed into the heartland' – in this case, a 'college town of 8,000, where violence once meant a few bar brawls and where the small-town school violence that exploded in Arkansas and Mississippi and Kentucky once seemed impossibly remote.' The violence in Springfield, writes the Sun's Peter Hermann (1998), fit the pattern of the other school shootings: 'It happened in the most unassuming of places.'

What does it mean to characterize a town as 'a good place' (Hampson, 1998) or 'a good and decent' place (Bragg, 1998a) or as a place of 'easy-going innocence' (Williams, 1997)? Where do reporters get the idea that violence does not happen in small towns?

Crime statistics, misleadingly used, provide part of the answer. 'Although juvenile crime is going down in the cities,' writes USA TODAY's Hampson (1998), 'it is going up in the countryside. A USA TODAY analysis of the FBI's Uniform Crime Reports found that juveniles in rural areas were arrested for murder and manslaughter at a higher rate in 1996 than in 1990.' That may be, but as Daniel Akst (2000) wrote in the Wall Street Journal, 'many more people are struck by lightning each year than die by violence in school.'

The best explanation of the news media's crime wave and what-a-story treatment of the 1997-1998 school shootings is that the incidents violated two sets of what Gans

(1980: 42-57) refers to as 'enduring values' in the news – 'small-town pastoralism' and 'social order.' In his discussion of social order, Gans defines two broad categories of news: disorder stories and leadership stories. An inveterate categorizer and sub-categorizer, Gans divides disorder stories into stories of natural, technological, moral and social disorder. It is not clear whether crime stories belong with the stories of moral disorder or the stories of social disorder because in marked contrast to Tuchman (1978) and Fishman (1981), Gans (1980: 60) makes only passing mention of crime stories. His primary interest is in the coverage of the kinds of disorder that the press saw as threatening 'political and social disintegration.' In the 1960s and '70s, such threats were thought to be coming not from any routine criminal act, but from political protest (against the Vietnam War and racial injustice), counter-cultural movements (hippies) and official abuses of power (Watergate).

Though Gans (1980: 48-49) never returns to the subject of small-town pastoralism, there is a clear connection between stories detailing 'the cohesiveness, friendliness and slow pace' of small towns and stories of social or moral disorder. While the idealization of small towns is an enduring value in American life, Gans writes that increasing news coverage of urban decay in the 1960s heightened 'the desirability both of nature and of smallness per se.' In other words, amid the social disorder of the 1960s and '70s, small towns, at least as journalists depicted them, stood as beacons of order. And when urban crime eclipsed political activism and counter-culturalism as threats to social order in the 1980s, that beacon shone brighter than ever.

This is what made the shootings in small-town schools seem doubly anomalous. The routinization of urban crime heightened the anomalousness of small towns: They became islands of safety in a dangerous world. But when the 1990s brought word of violent crime in small towns, it meant that even our safest places were becoming dangerous. Schools especially, as J. R. Moehringer (1998) of the Los Angeles Times observes, are 'the one place thought to be a sanctuary within the community.'

Syndicated columnist Leonard Pitts (1999; see also Hutchinson, 1999) rightly detects a racial dimension in the insistence upon the anomalousness of small-town violence:

> It might be instructive for the rest of us to confront the implied supposition that there are certain places in which youth violence is not supposed to happen. This is, after all, not the first time we've heard that said. To the contrary, we heard it after school shootings in other places, other small enclaves, that had somehow been deemed unlikely: Pearl, Miss.; West Paducah, Ky.; Jonesboro, Ark.; and others. Not supposed to happen here, folks cried…

The unspoken message, Pitts says, is that such things are supposed to happen in the city – and in late 20th-century America, our ideas about the city expanded to include the understanding that it is the place where people of color live. Columnists Froma Harrop (1998) of the Providence Journal-Bulletin and Tony Stewart (1998) of the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette berate their colleagues for what Stewart calls their 'apple-pie-in-the-oven' portrayals of small towns. Harrop turns small-town pastoralism on its head, suggesting that small-town violence is not anomalous at all, but the result of 'exurban isolation.'

Explaining the inexplicable

'A tragedy occurs somewhere in America,' writes Seattle Times television critic Kay McFadden (1998). 'Journalists crowd in, first to explain what happened, then why.' As Vincent, Crow and Davis (1997) point out, explanations are reassuring. Once the authorities know what caused the tragedy they can set about preventing future tragedies, or at least putting in place better procedures for coping with tragedies that cannot be prevented. The first attempts at making sense of school violence included two motifs which would recur in the coverage of subsequent incidents: The unhappy perpetrator was either lashing out at envied classmates or was a member of a nihilistic cult or clique. The students suspected of conspiring in the shootings at Pearl High School 'had a penchant for wearing black clothing,' according to The New York Times (Sack, 1997). Police said they might have been members of a satanic cult. 'I killed people because people like me are mistreated every day,' Luke Woodham wrote in a notebook he kept prior to the shootings (Sack, 1997).

To the problem of ostracism and nihilistic cliques, coverage of West Paducah added the possible influence of the mass media. 'The revelations' that shooting suspect Michael Carneal had talked about doing 'something similar' to the violent school takeover depicted in the movie, 'The Basketball Diaries,' wrote Atlanta Journal and Constitution reporter Mike Williams (1997b), 'are sure to renew the debate over the violent content of movies, television programs and rap music.' Carneal, Williams wrote, 'dressed in grunge fashion, with baggy jeans and old shirts.' But he associated with a group of kids who 'dress in black, paint their fingernails black,' according to a local school board member (Bowles, 1997). Bragg (1997) reported talk that Carneal was an atheist.

When two boys shot up their high school in Jonesboro less than four months after West Paducah, Los Angeles Times reporter J.R. Moehringer (1998) wrote that the crime 'seemed to follow a familiar pattern,' but that pattern was more than just one of school violence. The shootings in Jonesboro, 'seemed to obey the rules of a strange new ritual emerging here in the rural South' -- this despite the fact that the 'first' school shootings took place in Washington state and Alaska. The Jonesboro shootings touched off an outpouring of columns blaming school violence on the 'gun culture of the South' (Pompilio, 1999).

When, a month after Jonesboro, Andrew Wurst opened fire on an eighth-grade dance at a gym in Edinboro, all talk of the 'southern-ness' of the crime wave ceased, to be replaced by columns that pinned the blame on 'bad parents, cliquish students, ignorant school administrators and do-nothing police…the pernicious influence of the Internet, video games, violent movies, and…the prevalence of guns' (Seigal 1999: 85). Friends of the 14-year-old Edinboro suspect said 'they nicknamed him "Satan" because of his affection for the shock-rock band, Marilyn Manson' (Bucsko and Kane, 1998). In a story on the Springfield shootings, the Boston Globe's Ellen O'Brien (1998) interviewed an attorney involved with the families of victims in Jonesboro, who said, 'It's going to be hard for the national media now to pin it on a Southern gun culture.'

Inevitably, the reporters had to include their own output among the possible causes of school violence, though the newspaper reporters seem to prefer blaming their counterparts in television or with the news weeklies. 'Attention is attention and this is the ultimate attention-getting,' the principal of Heath High School in West Paducah tells Bragg (1998b) after the shootings in Springfield. 'I mean, getting your picture on the cover of Time and Newsweek. That is going out in a blaze of glory.' A Seattle Times story quotes from a message scrawled from a paper bag and hung on the Thurston High School fence that blames the media for sending the message that 'it's all right to go shoot out a school because the media will make you famous in 15 minutes' (Postman, 1998). Also after Springfield, a New York University psychologist raised the 'copycat' issue in an interview with Tamar Lewin (1998) of The New York Times: 'There is a kind of contagion with these events,' said Richard Gallagher. 'When they get a lot of attention it's as if the barrier that kept it from happening gets broken.' Chicago Sun-Times editor Nigel Wade (1998) became something of a journalism hero when he attempted to reduce the risk of a copycat crime by keeping the Springfield shootings off the front page.

Perhaps the sign that the cycle of coverage has exhausted itself is when the columnists turn their gaze upon the coverage itself and condemn 'the rush to judgment, the rush to explanation, the rush to speculation' (McFadden, 1998). In the end, all the 'emphatic guesses' (Leo, 1998) seemed to cancel each other out, leaving only the bafflement of those directly affected by the shootings. 'Why did he do it?' asked a teen in Pearl. 'There's no answers. Just a bunch of blank minds' (Bragg, 1997). 'The main question is, why,' Sheriff Frank Augustus told USA TODAY reporter Paul Hoversten (1997). 'That question is not going to get answered.' In Springfield, the school principal told citizens at a City Hall vigil, 'We might as well stop asking why. We will never know' (Hermann, 1998).

The news media's failure to provide reassurance in the wake of the school shootings draws our attention to a limitation of constructionist studies of news production. These studies expect the reporter to behave as a member of a bureaucratic institution who obtains information from members of other bureaucratic institutions and writes an account that, in Tuchman's (1978: 5) words, 'legitimates the status quo.' Examples are drawn from the work of beat reporters. Routine crime news, says Chibnall (1981), is essentially police news; that is, the reporter rarely gets a run-down on a crime from the criminal himself, but from those whose job it is to apprehend the criminal. Similarly, Hall et al. (1981) identify three types of crime news – police statements about a case, the state of the war against crime, and trials – all of which rely primarily on official sources. Yet what story of natural or man-made disaster, or heinous crime does not include a story about the witnesses or the neighbors or the survivors or the grieving loved ones as part of the package? The very predictability of such stories suggests that they too are part of the newsroom strategy of routinizing the unexpected. While I can hardly argue with Gans' (1980: 8-13) numbers when he asserts that reporters rely far more on 'knowns' than they do on 'unknowns,' I believe that those numbers reflect the dominance of beat reporting at most news organizations but do not adequately account for the dynamics of reporting stories that lie outside the work of routine beat coverage.

The reporters who covered the school shootings made the requisite calls to the experts, but lacking any consensus on the causes or prevention of school violence, the real story became the anomalousness of school violence in small-town America. To tell that story, the reporters relied on local sources who were willing to express their dismay that such a terrible thing could happen in such safe place. It may be that constructionists, with their preoccupation with the press as a bureaucratic institution, overemphasize what Schudson (1989: 267) calls 'the conservative, system-maintaining character of news' at the expense of its storytelling function.

Conclusion

Constructionist studies of news go a long way toward accounting for similarities among the stories different reporters write about the same events, as well as similarities among the stories that the same reporters write about different events. Tuchman's study of the dynamics of the what-a-story, Fishman's study of the crime wave dynamic and Gans' inclusion of small-town pastoralism and social order among the enduring values that inform journalistic practice are particularly helpful in accounting for similarities among stories about the school violence that occurred in 1997-1998.

Among those similarities, however, was an emphasis on the inexplicable (and therefore unpreventable) nature of each incident, both individually and as part of a series. That emphasis on the anomalous throws the constructionist paradox into bold relief: On one hand, the anomalous is a cardinal news value. On the other hand, the news media's role is to offer reassurance that the status quo will withstand the assault of the anomalous. Resisting all attempts at explanation, the school shootings remind us that sometimes, the act of imposing narrative form on shapeless experience is about as much sense as we are able to make.

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Creating new value for copy editing instruction in the curriculum and the university

by

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Introduction

Reporters and writers traditionally have held the highest status among the three steps of the newsroom production process – writing, editing, and design. Since the founding of *USA Today* in 1982, design has risen in status too because of the growing importance of visually appealing pages in attracting more readers.

Editors have taken a back seat to the reporters; they are largely invisible and treated as "second-class citizens," partly because of the odd hours editors work, and partly because of their often more reserved personalities.[1]

Journalism schools have also established curricula that reflect an industry emphasis on writing and reporting, beginning at the University of Wisconsin in 1905 when William G. Bleyer started the first newspaper-specific writing course.[2] Editing courses, while considered fundamental to any print journalism program, are not the popular ones. Many students prefer reporting and the glory of a byline or the creativity of a design class. Herbert Lee Williams, in a survey of the toughest courses to teach in journalism, said that "editing, perhaps understandably, seems to produce the widest range of problems for instructors."[3] He quoted a survey respondent:

> Journalism majors, for the most part, absolutely wallow in the "romance" of reporting – that is, they envision themselves with Page One bylines in The New York Times, but never see themselves as being on the rim or in the slot, or heaven help us, in a newsroom management

> position. And so, motivating them to take this art of editing as seriously and to work as hard at it as they do on their writing (in other words, to see an ability to edit as being integral to the information processing business) becomes the real challenge.[4]

Thanks to a report by the American Society of Newspaper Editors in 1995 that linked good editing with strong news credibility, the concerns of overloaded and often invisible copy editors are finally being heard. Moreover, as a result, the American Society of Copy Editors was formed in 1997 by copy editors and educators to find ways to improve the value and status of copy editors. What's more, the much-discussed media convergence that some see moving into the newsrooms is seen as putting more importance on editing. Steve Outing, who writes a new-media column for *Editor & Publisher* magazine, says that the newsroom of the future will put greater responsibility on editors than ever before.[5]

How should journalism programs respond to new attention by the industry on copy editing? What is the status of copy editing in journalism programs? Does its status reflect the industry, and how does it contribute to the overall journalism curriculum?

This paper presents and discusses results of a survey of journalism curricula in the United States on the status of copy editing. The research provides benchmark data on the state of copy editing instruction in major colleges and universities. It concludes that copy editing is generally healthy and respected in most programs, but still mirrors the industry and takes a back seat to reporting.

Context and literature review: Copy editing and credibility

Copy desk staff and editing instructors don't need to be convinced about the value of good copy editing. At a September 2000 American Copy Editors Society conference in Baltimore, editors and educators agreed with Associate Professor Jane T. Harrigan of the University of New Hampshire on the top 10 reasons why editing is cool.[6]

Educators would do well to note some of these reasons: "You have responsibility and power." "You decide how readers will perceive the news - how they will perceive the world." "Catching a dumb mistake before readers see it is a rush." "You can move anywhere and find a job."[7]

Harrigan told a group of journalism instructors at the annual AEJMC conference in August 1994 that if we could improve editing, we could save the world. There is some truth in her words. She could have added that if we could improve the role of editing in journalism curricula and show its relevance in academia, we could raise the status of journalism programs in academia.

Editors are the quality-control people at a newspaper or any print or online publication. When quality falls, credibility crumbles; the newspaper is remiss in its duty to inform its community, and its role in society as a useful institution is diminished.[8] ASNE conducted a study in 1999 on the need for credibility in newspapers, and five members of ACES responded.[9] In a story on the study, L. Carol Christopher wrote that John McIntyre, who wrote one of the five online ACES responses, and Pam Robinson, ACES president from its founding until April 2000, believe that "giving the copy desk credibility inside the walls of the newsroom will improve a newspaper's credibility in the community. How? Provide the time for good copy editing, says Robinson. Acknowledge the importance of good copy editing, says McIntyre."[10]

ACES also helped with a credibility study conducted by the Associated Press Managing Editors. ACES members' concerns were being heard; a link had been firmly established between the credibility of news and the important role of copy editing.

The mission statement of the Department of Journalism at San Francisco State University shows that it understands the link between credibility, democratic values, and the knowledge gained from a story that is properly written, edited and presented: "The ability of people to govern themselves in a democratic society can be no better than the quality of news and information they receive."[11]

It continues:

> The San Francisco State University Department of Journalism prepares students to search for, gather and

> present news in words and pictures according to the highest standards of truth, honesty, fairness, clarity, courage, independence, importance, perseverance and service to the democratic ideals that underlie the First Amendment.[12]

Many of these ideals are standards that editors, in their role as gatekeepers, check for: truth (accuracy), honesty, fairness, and clarity. Sadly, newspapers and online news media have been criticized for factual errors, sloppy writing, and for not upholding ethical standards in the rush to get a story. Editors have complained that they do not have enough time to catch mistakes and properly edit because so many other duties, such as pagination and creating special sections, have been heaped on them. Buck Ryan, director of the School of Journalism and Telecommunications at the University of Kentucky, commented on the problem in 1991: "'Copy editor' has become a strange way to describe someone who has so little time to edit copy."[13]

The American Society of Newspaper Editors noticed the problem and in May 1989 "The Changing Face of the Newsroom," an ASNE report, called the copy desk the "Mt. Everest of discontent."[14]

In April 1995, Merv Aubespin, chairman of the ASNE human resources committee, declared 1995 the year of the copy editor. The first National Newspaper Copy Editors Conference was held in September; two more were held in 1996 – all at universities. One of the organizers, Ryan, was intent on getting educators involved. In April 1997, he organized "A Return to Quality Editing," which was published by ASNE's human resources committee, and it included a review of research by educators on editing.[15]

The American Copy Editors Society was formed in 1997 to give them a voice and in recognition of copy editors' important role in producing news. Carrie Camillo of the *Minneapolis Star-Tribune* conducted a survey for ACES in 1998 to address the problem of the shortage of copy editors.[16]

The 115 respondents to the ACES survey offered suggestions on how the industry could build a better pool of copy editors: "Raising pay, providing more support, increasing the importance of the job and offering more and better training," Hank Glamann, then of the *Houston Chronicle*, wrote.[17] Only nine respondents (10 percent) said that educators were encouraging students to become copy editors; 57 respondents said they were not, and 23 said some were and some were not.[18] Some editors in the ACES survey said that students never heard about copy editing or were not told that copy editors are in great demand.

In the ACES study, editors encouraged educators to make copy editing more important and to "hammer the supply line." They said that the "need is serious and the work is noble." But University of Hawaii editing professor Ann Auman instead urged "hammering newspaper managers to raise the value of copy editing in newsrooms. Then students might be more attracted to the field."[19]

She suggested that professionals and educators work together to raise the value of editing. All journalism educators, not just editing instructors, need to understand the value of editing in print and online publications.

The results of the ACES survey became a panel discussion, "Teaching Editing in Changing Times" at the annual Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication conference in New Orleans in 1999. Panelist Dorothy Wilson, managing editor of *The Sun-Herald* in Biloxi, Miss., and a founding board member of ACES, said that editing is the "glue in the whole process of writing, editing, and presentation. Copy editors are the quality-control people; they add value to the final product."[20]

Copy editing and its place in the academy

Copy editing could also be seen as the "glue" in the journalism curriculum. It should be discussed in the context of the missions of programs and their place in the academy. Students who take copy editing learn word skills as well as how to critically evaluate a story, develop news judgment and a sense of ethics in selecting stories for possible publication, and check for accuracy and missing information. Many of these are skills and attributes that are valued in the academy. Others are more practical, such as headline writing, spelling, grammar, and punctuation, which some academics say belong in vocational schools.

Where does copy editing fit in the debate over issues-oriented versus practice-oriented courses? In 1906 Bleyer outlined the first professional journalism curriculum with one-quarter of the student's courses in journalism and three-quarters in the social sciences and humanities.[21] This formed the basis for accreditation guidelines. Yet it has been well-documented that newspaper professionals and academics alike are unsatisfied with journalism education and are calling for change.[22] In 1995, the AEJMC Curriculum Task Force presented a report called "JMC Education: Responding to the Challenge of Change," and in 1996, a response was published in *Journalism & Mass Communication Educator*. Both said JMC education needed to find a way to establish its centrality to the mission of the university.[23]

In 1994, the APME developed an agenda for journalism education. APME members and recent college graduates were asked to rank the top five attributes for journalism graduates for the future from a list of 11 items. These top five were: 1. thinking analytically; 2. presenting information well; 3. understanding numbers in the news; 4. listening to readers; and 5. writing concisely.[24]

However, editors do not rate journalism programs well in producing new hires with strong skills. Fred Bales concluded in a study that professionals want it all, and they say journalism schools ought to be training students in the liberal arts and to think critically but at the same time want them to have the skills to start on Day One.[25]

Fred Fedler, Arlen Carey, and Tim Counts, in a study of cutbacks at public and private institutions, found that only six of the 225 respondents said they would cut journalism.[26] Journalism did better than major fields such as business, education, sociology, speech, statistics, and theater. Advertising, public relations, and broadcast were more likely to be eliminated. Journalism was more likely to be merged with communication.

In the 1996 AEJMC report, the Curriculum Task Force's mission was to find ways to "make media education central to the academic institution as a liberal-arts oriented professional field."[27] The task force held that:

> [T]he purpose of media education is to produce well-rounded graduates who have critical-thinking skills as well as practical skills, and who have an understanding of the philosophy of the media and a dedication to the public service role that the media have in our society.[28]

The task force also said that educators need to give students basic and advanced skills, "an understanding of the philosophical underpinnings of the profession, and the critical-thinking and reasoning skills expected of a liberally educated person."[29] The task force concluded that the area where most improvement is needed is not in teaching basic grammar and spelling skills or basic professional skills, but in furthering our students' critical thinking and understanding of the philosophy of the media.

Should programs be skills-oriented or issues-oriented? Rayfield wrote that the loss of relevance to media industries is a "ticket to oblivion." Moreover, he said that if what is taught in journalism schools goes "far enough out in left field, what we teach will no longer be relevant to journalism and mass communication careers, which would take away our raison d'etre."[30] But Betty Medsger made a connection between skills and issues courses, and views journalism as providing students with critical-thinking skills.[31]

In a study by Christ and Hynes of 176 journalism schools' mission statements, 64 (36.4 percent) listed critical thinking or analytical skills as specific kinds of learning they expected their students to achieve through their JMC curriculum. Seventy-eight (44.3 percent) of the programs listed other practical skills, including basic written communication, information gathering, oral, and visual communication skills, reporting and production. The study did not specifically define critical thinking as it relates to journalism, or how professors were developing it in skills or non-skills issues classes.[32]

Nevertheless, critical-thinking skills are being taught in copy editing in the form of standard higher-order skills, such as analyzing stories for holes and missing information, editing for clarity, and checking for accuracy. Editors also must make ethical judgments about story and photo selection. Add to this the new demands of technology, reorganization of copy desks, and of the pressures of business competition and you have a truly overloaded copy desk.

Studies by John Russial and Ann Auman indicate educators have been sent a mixed message by professionals.[33] Should copy editing focus on traditional skills or new ones, such as teamwork and technology? Auman found that the overloaded copy desk is mirrored in the classroom. Auman and Alderman suggested that a basic course in copy editing is not enough. An advanced course and one in design also are needed. In addition, a new-media component is needed in editing classes if Steve Outing's prediction is valid. Claiming "It's editors whose jobs will change the most" in a new media landscape delivering news by "print, home-printed, Web, e-mail, PDA, mobile phones and pagers, Internet radio, etc," Outing said, "editors will foremost have to understand how content must be presented appropriate to each medium."[34]

Research Questions

What is the status of copy editing in journalism curricula? How does it contribute to journalism curricula? Can copy editing find a stronger place or voice in the curriculum and in the academy? This study was conducted to begin the discussion on the value of copy editing in journalism curricula because no studies were. It is hoped that this will begin the discussion on its place and contribution not just in journalism, but in the university.

Method

Surveys were sent to editing instructors at 109 accredited journalism programs in the United States in spring 2000. Telephone calls and e-mail correspondence to identify and seek cooperation from the principal editing instructors or departmental administrators at each school preceded an initial mailing of a four-page survey to editing instructors at the accredited programs. A follow-up mailing was sent three to four weeks after the first mailing to faculty who had not responded. Most of the questions were multiple choice. However, a few solicited open responses in an effort to gather anecdotal information that would be helpful in discussing changes in copy editing curricula and its contribution to journalism curricula, and in analyzing the quantified responses to the other questions. In addition, several sections of the instrument sought Likert-scale responses to such questions as likely proficiency of their journalism graduates in a variety of news-handling skills, and to the importance of certain news-handling skills among journalism graduates.

Results

Sixty-nine surveys were returned for a 63 percent response rate. Respondents' schools journalism enrollments ranged from 60 to 1,200 undergraduates and seven to 150 graduate students. Of the 69 respondents, the majority (93 percent) were on the semester system. Most schools did not have a copy editing sequence (91.2 percent). Five (7.3 percent) of the 69 respondents said they had a copy editing sequence.

The editing course was most frequently taught by a tenured or tenure-track professor (69.1 percent); 10.3 percent were taught by adjuncts, 11 percent marked "other," which could refer to an instructor or another title, and 1.8 percent marked graduate student.

Respondents were asked to indicate how many required and elective editing and reporting courses they had at their schools. This question was asked so that a comparison could be made between reporting and editing. Table 1 shows the percentage of respondents who had none, one, two, three, four, or five required editing and reporting courses:

Table 1: Required News Courses (n=67)

	Editing	Reporting/Writing
Range	0-5	0-5
Mean	1.2388	2.8657
Quantity:		
None	6.7%	0%
1	68.7%	6%
2	20.9%	32.8%
3	4.5%	37.3%
4	0%	16.4%
5	0%	7.5%

t=-11.239, p=<.05

T-tests of paired-sample means reported in Table 1 were conducted and the difference was significant at the .05 level. Reflecting the aforementioned traditional emphasis on reporting and news writing over editing, there was a considerably greater number of required courses devoted to getting the story than in quality and presentation-skills represented by copy editing. Whereas 68.7 percent of the schools reported no more than one required course in editing, 61.2 percent of the schools reported three or more required reporting and writing courses.

A program's core values are represented by what courses are required, but elective opportunities can provide balance in the program. Participants in this survey were asked about the extent of additional, elective copy editing courses in comparison with additional, elective reporting and news writing courses. Table 2 gives the percentage of respondents who had between zero and seven elective editing or reporting courses:

Table 2: Additional Elective Courses Available

	Editing (n=62)	Reporting/Writing (n=59)
Range	0-4	0-7
Mean	.9123	2.4737
Quantity:		
None	41.9%	13.6%
1	35.5%	16.9%
2	17.7%	22%
3	1.6%	23.7%
4	3.2%	10.2%
5	0%	10.2%
6	0%	1.7%
7	0%	1.7%

t=-7.017, p=<.05

The results again showed significantly more offerings in news reporting and writing, where 69.5 percent had two or more electives in reporting and writing as compared with 77.4 percent that had no more than one elective in editing.

Of 64 respondents, 77 percent said they had an additional layout and design course. About 72 percent said the introductory copy editing course was not required of all journalism/communication majors. Table 3 shows the major, sequence, or concentration in which the introductory news editing course was required.

Table 3: Sequences requiring basic copy editing, if not all. (n=52)

News editorial	88.5%
Public relations	21.2%
Magazine	21.2%
Online journalism	15.4%
Broadcast	11.5%
Advertising	3.8%

Just under half (46.3 percent) of the programs had an advanced editing course for which the basic editing course was a prerequisite. It was generally not required in most sequences (e.g., advertising and broadcasting) except for news editorial

(Table 4). It should be noted in examining Table 4 that response to the set of questions about an advanced editing course was lower (n=38) than for any other sets of questions in the survey. It would be reasonable to infer that the non-responses indicate the absence of required advanced editing courses. Moreover, of those who did respond, 42.4 percent said they, too, had no required advanced editing course.

Table 4: Sequences requiring advanced editing course (n=38)

Not required	42.4%
News editorial	44.7%
Public relations	10.5%
Magazine	15.8%
Online journalism	5.3%

Respondents were asked to gauge the importance of copy editing in their curricula in terms of help given to students in finding copy editing internships and how that help ranks in the overall program in relation to prospective reporting and news writing interns (Table 5).

Table 5: Help finding copy editing vs. reporting internships (N=68).

Less	10.3%
About the same	79.4%
More	10.3%

As Table 5 shows, by far the most respondents reported no disparity in the help offered copy editing and reporting students to gain internships. While that might simply indicate parity in the relative regard for the two specialities in the news-ed program, the similarity might also reflect commendable zeal in helping all students succeed. Another question asked about the apparent priorities given these programs in journalism departments (Table 6).

Table 6: Departmental priority for editing vs. reporting/writing

	Copy Editing (n=69)	Reporting/Writing (n=68)
1=Low priority	13.0%	2.9%
2=Medium-low priority	30.4%	5.9%
3=Medium-high priority	36.2%	30.9%
4=High priority	20.3%	60.3%
Mean	2.6618	3.4853

t=-7.573, p=<.05

T-tests of paired-sample means reported in Table 6 were conducted and the difference was significant at the .05 level. The data show while 56.5 percent of educators responding felt copy editing instruction received a medium-high to high priority, 91.3 percent believed reporting and writing had medium-high to high priority in their departments.

Respondents were also asked whether their editing course content and curriculum had changed in the past four years (Table 7).

Table 7: Extent change reported in last four years in …

	Course content (N=67)	Editing curriculum (N=64)
1=Significant	29.9%	9.4%
2=Somewhat	52.2%	46.9%
3=Only slightly	16.4%	17.2%
4=No change	1.5%	26.6%
Mean	1.8955	2.6094

t=-5.303, p=>.05

T-tests of paired-sample means reported in Table 7 were conducted and the difference was significant at the .05 level. As indicated in Table 7, the changes that are occurring in editing education tend to take place within the course, rather than through significant changes in the overall curriculum. This is consistent with the suggestion made earlier that it is the editing course, rather than the program, that is absorbing most of the industry's demands for more skills and more training. Respondents were asked how course content had changed. Several categories were included as well as an open-ended one. This question was designed to get a sense of the impact of new technology and of curriculum change on copy editing, as well as get a sense of its priority as a requirement (Table 8).

Table 8: What is new in editing content and curriculum (n=61-63)

	Yes (%)	No (%)
Integrated w/new technology	80.6	17.7
Integrated w/new media	43.5	56.5
Editing course(s) added	8.1	91.9
Editing course(s) dropped	0	100
Editing added as elective	6.5	93.5
Course merged with others	1.6	98.4
Separate design course added	12.9	87.1
Copy editing added as requirement	8.2	91.8
Copy editing dropped as requirement	6.6	93.4
Course collaborates w/other courses	20.6	79.4
Other changes	11.3	88.7

The results give further weight to the suggestion that while new demands on copy-editor skills are being recognized, they are not being met with curriculum shifts that might expand program offering so much as by in-class enhancements. Such enhancements may be being brought about by individual instructors and at the expense of class time and emphasis previously devoted to other skills basic to copy editing.

Editing's value to the other sequences showed a mixed record, in some cases carrying a warning of change and discipline convergence to the news-ed traditionalists. Two respondents said that copy editing had been added as a requirement to the public relations sequence; one said it had been added to the magazine concentration, and another said magazine had been combined with news editorial, and that "all sequences were reconfigured into equally required 'craft' and 'conceptual' courses."

Three respondents said copy editing had been dropped from public relations as a requirement; one said advertising students were not required to take it, another said it was not required for magazine and photojournalism students, and another said it had been dropped from all sequences except news editorial and magazine.

An open-ended question asked respondents to describe how the editing curriculum contributes to their overall program. Their responses will be examined in the discussion section, but some comments showed up frequently. Copy editing was described as:

- A required or foundation course.
- A capstone course.
- One that prepares students for entry-level jobs.
- The foundation for students working on the student newspaper.
- The course that improves depth, creativity, and detailed thinking.

- One that emphasizes critical thinking.
- An essential skills course that improves reporting and writing skills.
- A course to prepare students to work with editors, writers, and designers; one that instills a sense of caring.
- One teaching discipline and socialization skills.
- A course increasing students' marketability.

Discussion

Given suggestions in the literature that the academy tracks the profession in the relative importance placed on reporting and writing over editing, it is not surprising that schools had more required and elective reporting and writing courses than editing. The mean of the responses of the required editing courses was 1.2 courses, compared with 2.9 reporting/news writing courses. Nearly 70 percent of respondents reported that they had one required editing course, compared with two (33 percent) and three (37 percent) required reporting/news writing courses.

Nearly 42 percent of respondents did not have an elective editing course, although a good portion, 35.5 percent, did. Only about 14 percent of respondents did not have an elective reporting/news writing course; most had two (22 percent) or three (23.7 percent). However, nearly 77 percent did have an additional layout and design course to take some of the load off copy editing; however, one respondent commented that layout and design was taught in advanced editing.

Given the state of the overloaded copy desk, it is encouraging that nearly half the programs (46.3 percent) had an advanced editing course, but it is not generally required (42.4 percent). About 30 percent said it was required in the news editorial sequence. Moreover, advanced editing courses tended to put emphasis on or in some cases be exclusively devoted to design rather than wordsmithing.

One result shows that copy editing is not considered central, or "the glue" in schools' curriculum. About 72 percent said the introductory copy editing course was not required of all journalism/communication majors. Not surprisingly, 88.5 percent said it was required in news editorial. Only 21.2 percent said it was required in public relations and magazine; only 15.4 percent in online journalism. Yet, copy editing is an integral part of producing publications in these fields. And, in public relations, press releases must be well edited if they are to be read and used by critical editors. It is possible that a component of editing is taught in courses in these fields.

Editing did receive high-enough priority in schools that it was taught most often by a tenured or tenure-track faculty member. However, it did not get as high a ranking in priority compared with reporting/news writing. Its mean was 2.66 – a medium-high priority – compared with 3.48 – a high priority – for reporting/news writing.

A handful of respondents commented that copy editing had either been dropped or added as a requirement in sequences such as public relations and magazine, and the responses were about equally mixed. It doesn't appear that copy editing is losing ground overall; nearly 21 percent said it collaborates with other courses. Twelve respondents commented that copy editing collaborates with courses such as reporting, magazine, visual communication, graphics, photography, and producing publications. In this respect it is indeed "the glue" in the process. When students work in a collaborative setting, they can see how all components are glued together through copy editing.

One thing is clear from the anecdotal comments about copy editing: it has an integral place in sequences that require it. Respondents called it both the capstone and foundation course. It was described as both a skills course and one that provides critical thinking. It prepares students for entry-level jobs and improves writing skills while teaching layout. Forty-seven respondents commented on its positive value; seven had less positive comments.

- "The professors who recognize the skills honed in editing insist that their top students take the course."
- "Improves the depth of thinking and creativity n general and executing reportage; enlarges breadth of thinking (a whole product); sharpens detailed thinking; clarifies audience."
- "It emphasizes how things are done – why a word is chosen or how a sentence ins constructed, whether a number makes sense or serves a purpose, how a story is organized or how it is packaged on a page. It tries to instill a sense of caring – caring whether the message is getting through to the reader."
- "One required component among many; it emphasizes language skills, story structure, critical thinking."
- "Instruction in editing improves quality of graduates (and marketability) in writing, reporting and management potential."
- "Good editing is essential to good journalism. Learning editing makes all better writers."
- "It strengthens students' language skills, enhances their ability to spot content problems in their own copy and develops their news judgment."
- "Create a more thoughtful writer."

- "All students learn style, shaping writing for audiences; course provides newsroom socialization."
- "Absolutely essential."

A few respondents indicated they were struggling to keep copy editing in their programs, or that it did not contribute much, or was not given a high priority by students or administrators.

- "It is a course required of both undergraduates and grad print students, but 90 percent of those students resent having to take the course and don't see how it can make them better reporters."
- "Our program does not see editing as a significant career goal for students. It is seen as merely a complement to reporting."
- "It will be significantly de-emphasized next year."
- "Only a single course – perhaps aimed more at improving writing. Very few students want to edit."
- "It's a battle to keep it in the program."

Given the evidence in the literature and reports from the newsroom, it was discouraging to hear any editing instructors question its value, which by most forecasts will increase rather than decrease. Likewise, it was discouraging to hear of programs that are not cognizant of these industry trends.

The results also indicate that instructors have changed their editing course content during the past four years (mean was 1.9 on a 1 to 4 scale, with 1 = significantly and 2 somewhat significantly) but not so much their editing curriculum (mean = 2.6). The changes involved primarily adapting to new technology and adding new media components.

One ramification of the relatively lower emphasis on copy editing at the curriculum level compared with the individual course level is an inability to examine just what the proper mix of reporting/writing and editing courses might be. An issue not addressed in this study is how many editing courses a program ought to have and what an appropriate balance might be. Moreover, although the survey asked educators about a variety of teaching objectives (e.g., grammar skills, copy editing, headline writing), the study did not attempt to prescribe a canon for editing education, although the development of a model curriculum might be useful to many educators.

Conclusion

The survey results show that in general, those who teach copy editing feel it has at least a medium-high priority in news-ed curricula, and that it is an essential part of the program. The results also show that even in news-ed sequences, it does not have equal footing with reporting/news writing classes. The copy editing skills in precision language, factual accuracy, ethics and news presentation are less valued in other sequences found in the journalism and mass communication program.

As ACES founding member Dorothy Wilson told educators in 1999: "For years, the newsroom process has been driven by the reporting side, which has dictated when copy editors work. There's something really wrong with that."[35] Is there something wrong with it also driving journalism curricula, particularly at a time when copy editors for print and online media are scarce and in much demand?

Copy editing instructors need to remind themselves that they are also teaching critical-thinking skills, and attempt to define those. A few of the anecdotal comments mentioned that editing teaches critical thinking, but the emphasis was on teaching hands-on skills and news judgment and how copy editing prepares students for professional careers. Critical-thinking skills were rated as extremely important by 61 percent of the respondents, yet rarely mentioned in the respondents' comments.

The 1995 AEJMC Curriculum Task Force report on journalism and mass communication curricula urged educators not to view the practical and theoretical components of the JMC curriculum as a dichotomy.[36] The Oregon Report's model suggested that conceptual and craft courses be merged in many instances to give students a broader understanding of a rapidly changing field.[37] Perhaps one way to raise the status of copy editing is to raise the understanding and awareness that editing gives students the big picture. It goes beyond shaping their understanding of the process of producing news and the "glue" role of copy editing. It makes them think about readers, and how editors' values, ethics, and the culture of news enter into editors' selection and presentation of stories and photos.

Copy editing teaches students to question everything from commas to quotes to motives to effects on readers. Why were certain sources chosen? Is there missing information? What hasn't been covered? What biases does the reporter bring with him or her? What advertisers might be interested in the piece? Perhaps it is time for editing instructors to develop a curriculum for an advanced editing course that is integrated with conceptual courses, and in so doing, demonstrates the value of copy editing in the journalism/communication curriculum.

A future study could focus on how critical thinking is being taught in editing courses and how instructors define it. That would take copy editing a step closer to showing how it, and the journalism/communication curriculum, is central to the mission of the university.

NOTES

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Back to the Future?
Teaching Copy Editing Skills in Changing Times

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Abstract

A survey of editing professors at ACEJMC-accredited programs indicates that traditional skills of text editing, headline-writing and design remain fundamental but that new skills involving technological and organizational competencies have become quite important too. The study also compares the responses of professors with those of copy editing professionals in a previous national survey. It shows that professors and professionals are largely in agreement about which skills are crucial for copy editors to have but that professors feel their students need a wider variety of skills. Neither group currently places much emphasis on multimedia skill. The views of professors were closer to those of professionals at small to mid-size papers, papers that are more likely to hire students out of college.

News editing has undergone several waves of substantial change in the last 25 years. The most obvious has been technological. Computer editing, pagination and digital imaging, which were barely a dream 30 years ago, are tools of the trade today.

Organizational change is a more recent development. Among its manifestations are design desks, newsroom teams and maestro approaches, as well as increased awareness of the need for better leadership and people skills.

The growth of online media has spawned a third area of considerable ferment, one that has quickened in the last year or two. Aspects of this change are the integration of print and Web staffs, the introduction of multimedia coverage by newspapers and convergent newsroom experiments.

Journalism educators who prepare students to enter the world of news editing have been watching these changes for decades with a mixture of fascination and trepidation. Hitting a moving target is always a challenge, but to stretch a metaphor, journalism educators feel they have to hit the old targets at the same time they're shooting at the one (or more) in motion.

How should journalism education address these changes? The continuum is broad – from retreating to the basics of copyediting and headline-writing and letting industry handle the rest to going one better than industry and experimenting with new curricular forms to meet a multimedia world. Courses already are jammed with training in traditional skills, skills that most would agree remain crucial.[1] The questions are fairly simple but the answers complex: How much technology should we teach, or expect students to learn by themselves? A lot, a little, none? What does the industry want, and is it appropriate to expect journalism programs to provide it? Do journalism programs have the resources – human and financial? Can they go too far too fast? If journalism programs jump wholeheartedly into multimedia education, are they running the risk of creating the 21st century equivalent of a videotext curriculum?

Another way to phrase the question is, Where should journalism educators focus when they design editing curricula? Should they teach skills from the past and present, or should they try to predict and prepare for the future? Or all of the above? There has long been a belief that the industry is closer to the cutting edge of innovation because it has access to more expertise and the latest technology. Is that belief supported by data? Which group, for example, is more inclined to say multimedia skill is important?

This study, which is based on a survey of ACEJMC-accredited programs, examines what professors say is important for students to know about editing. It also compares what professors at accredited programs say about necessary skills with what professional copy editors say is important. The issue that lies beneath the surface of many such discussions is where the academy should be. Should it lead the industry or follow? It is difficult to begin to answer that question without a clear sense of where the academy is now in the teaching of copy editing skills.

Background

For some in the academy, the question of which skills to teach is overshadowed by another: Should journalism and communication programs continue to emphasize professional skills that prepare students for jobs in traditional media industries, or should they focus their energies elsewhere? This criticism takes different forms; one version holds that journalism and communication programs should pay much less attention to practitioner skills training because of its vocational nature. Instead of ensuring that students will have industry-specific entry-level skills, schools should concentrate on conceptual and critical issues. The University of North Dakota's School of Communication, for example, "abandoned a subservience to career tracks in favor of a curriculum organized around significant communication issues."[2] Blanchard, Christ and others have made similar arguments in favor of an integrated curriculum that focuses far less on practitioner skills and more on communication issues and critical-thinking abilities.[3]

Others disagree. Medsger, for example, argues that professional coursework remains crucial and itself is liberal in focus because it emphasizes critical thinking and other hallmarks of a liberal education.[4] A recent study by Dickson and Brandon found that professionals and professors disagreed that journalism programs should move from industry-oriented sequences to more general mass media studies.[5] Christ and Hynes, in a study of mission statements collected in late 1995, indicated that many, if not most, journalism and communications programs attempted to strike a balance between professional preparation and liberal arts education.[6] "It is clear," they wrote, "that many programs embrace the idea that media education involves preparing a liberally educated professional.[7]

A second broad criticism of skills training is that it typically is too narrowly focused for a changing media world.[8] Some media educators look to the idea of media convergence to support an argument that industry-specific training is anachronistic and that students need to develop skills they can apply in various media environments. In 1993, for example, Rakow said that "technologies, media industries, and careers are changing so rapidly and in such unpredictable directions that preparing students for today's media occupations is shortsighted and ill-advised."[9] More recently, Pavlik argues that new digital media present "a fundamental challenge to journalism education" and that to work effectively in the new media era, journalists will need to be comfortable with text, audio, video and interactivity.[10] Outing, who writes a popular online column about the online news industry, says that because newsrooms of the future will publish to different media, "Reporters, obviously, will have to master using new devices to communicate, collect news, and do research." But, he adds, " ...It's editors whose jobs will change the most ... tomorrow's editors will foremost have to understand how content must be presented appropriate to each medium."[11]

In October 2000, the first of five recommendations of the Subcommittee on Educational Technology of the AEJMC Task Force on Journalism and Mass Communication at the Millennium took a similar position with respect to journalism education. It said that programs should "work toward re-conceptualizing and re-organizing their curricula to emphasize cross-media JMC education, rather than media-specific education." The report also points out that "a growing number of leading JMC educators and JMC professionals are increasingly convinced that the approach proposed here makes sense and will likely produce the types of JMC professionals the industry will need in the years ahead."[12]

It is clear that the development of online journalism has created a demand for newsworkers who have new skills, particularly in HTML and digital image processing. It is less clear whether much demand exists in online news media for convergence skills such as video.[13] Within the last five or more years, many universities have created new-media classes or even new curricula that attempt to provide students with a more broad-based set of skills.[14] Recent reports of convergence experiments within traditional news media industries also have raised suggestions that traditional training of journalists may not meet industry needs for long. Recently, New York Times publisher Arthur Sulzberger Jr. added his voice to those preaching convergence:

"Whether it is the printed pages of the paper or the digital realm of the Internet, in magazines or books, on television or radio, we have become single-minded in our efforts to reach this knowledge-hungry audience, regardless of the means of distribution."[15] Several newspapers that have experimented with multimedia reporting and editing have been featured in trade journal articles.[16] The experiments of several major news organizations to create linkages between print and television stations within a common newsroom have been widely reported, though the level of actual integration of staffs has not been great.[17] Such experiments also have been the focus of much discussion at professional and academic conferences, such as AEJMC, prompting calls for multimedia training of students.

On the whole, though, beyond anecdotes, speeches at conferences and position statements, there has been little evidence to suggest that journalism students are ill-served by traditional sequence-based curricula, much less to support the idea of a wholesale turning-away from industry-specific education. Indeed, there is evidence many online journalists have been drawn from the ranks of print, and online startups have done well luring talent from traditional newspapers.[18]

In the academy, this debate about sequence separation vs. integration is likely to continue against the backdrop of the continuing development of online journalism and other forms of media convergence.

Newspaper industry issues

Focusing more narrowly on the newspaper industry, several studies have indicated that industry-specific skills remain in great demand, particular for editors.

A study by Auman and Alderman found general agreement between editors and educators on what skills were important for new copyediting hires to have.[19] Both groups ranked traditional word editing skills most important. Auman reported in an earlier study that editors did not believe that new hires had adequate preparation; they felt entry-level hires were deficient in traditional editing skills, page design and general knowledge.[20]

Technology skills appear to have grown in importance throughout the '90s, which is no surprise, given the increasing reliance on computers for page design and photo handling in the mid-'90s. Russial found a substantial discrepancy between what skills editors said were important in an APME survey and what skills newspapers sought in job advertisements. Editors ranked technology skills relatively low and critical thinking abilities very high in the APME survey, but job descriptions for copyeditors were largely silent about critical skills and made it clear that very specific skills, such as Quark pagination, were quite important and becoming more so.[21]

There is additional evidence that technology skills have become important in newsroom hiring. In a survey of photo editors in 1998, Russial found that specific technology skills, such as knowledge of Photoshop and negative scanning, were considered nearly as important for new hires as traditional photography skills but that convergence skills, such as video, were considered extremely unimportant.[22] Have technology skills become as important for copyediting hires?

Besides facing technological upheaval, many newspapers have experienced other institutional changes in the last decade, and some of those changes may mean that editors will need to develop new skills. These include the movement to newsroom teams and team-like structures,[23] cross-training of editors,[24] the growth of design desks[25] and a general re-emphasis on management, leadership and working together.[26] These issues have been discussed in trade journals and in several academic studies, and they remain popular topics at national conferences, such as those of the American Copy Editing Society and Society of News Design. Taken together, these innovations suggest that new hires may need new organizational competencies and people skills. Are these newer skills as important as traditional skills?

Professors of editing know about these organizational changes in the industry, but they already are puzzling over how to cram traditional and technological skills into their classes, not to mention training in multimedia. Editing teachers can perhaps be forgiven if they occasionally wonder just which of the many aspects of editing they need to teach and how much time they need to spend on them. Previous research has indicated that there's a need for more than one editing course – one basic and one on advanced skills, such as layout and design, visual journalism and coaching writers. Schools that have added this course or one in design have taken some of the pressure off the basic editing course, but with convergence, the pressure is on again to figure out how to incorporate editing for the web and web design skills.[27]

Questions

How much time do copy editing professors spend on traditional editing, headline-writing and design skills, which one might think of as skills from the past (though still necessary for the present and presumably for the future)? Is there much time for other types of training, such as technology and organizational skills, the need for which has been articulated in the trade press more recently? Are professors responsive to future trends relating to media convergence?

Is there overall agreement between professors and professionals on necessary skills? Do the skills break into discrete bundles, and if so, do professors and professionals place the same skills in the same bundles? If not, what are the key differences? Is there a difference based on size of paper?

Method

Surveys targeted the principal editing instructors at 109 accredited journalism programs in the United States. Potential respondents were identified by telephone and e-mail contacts. The first mailing was made in early spring 2000, and a follow-up mailing was done three to four weeks later. Sixty-nine surveys were returned for a 63 percent response rate.[28]

Questions addressed how much time is spent in the copy editing course on traditional tasks, such as grammar, spelling, punctuation and style; text editing (other than grammar); headline writing; design, and other.

Survey questions included 39 Likert-type scale items addressing a variety of proficiencies editing professors might expect students who had taken copy editing courses to have developed. These questions were scaled 1 to 5 (1=very unlikely to be proficient to 5=very likely to be proficient). Broadly speaking, the proficiencies cover text editing, headline and caption writing, teamwork and organizational abilities, technology and multimedia.

Another set of questions asked how important it is for graduates to have a more limited set of 16 editing skills. These were included to provide a basis for comparison with a national survey done in 1999 that asked the same questions of copy editors and copy editing supervisors.

The national survey used a modified random-sampling procedure for papers of more than 15,000 circulation. They were divided into four circulation categories, with each group accounting for 12 million to 14 million daily circulation. Papers were asked to return either two, three or four surveys, depending on circulation size.[29]

An initial mailing was sent in early 1999. Follow-up phone calls or e-mails were made within the next four weeks to newspapers that had returned no surveys. A second mailing was made to contacts at those papers. Additional follow-up contacts were made to non-responding papers in the smallest circulation category, which was underrepresented in returns. The overall response rate was 174 returned surveys or 59 percent of the sample of 295. Of the 117 newspapers, 88 returned at least one survey, representing about 75 percent of the sample.[30]

Results and Discussion

Time spent on traditional skills

Table 1 shows the percentage of time spent in basic and advanced editing classes on broad categories of traditional skills. More than 60 percent of the time in the basic class is spent on text editing–on grammar, spelling and punctuation and on other editing skills. Headline writing and design account for a total of about 30 percent in the basic class. In the advanced editing classes, which are taught by fewer than half of the programs that returned surveys, more emphasis is placed on design (33.8 percent) and considerably less on text editing issues (about 37 percent total). Time spent on "other" skills is about 16 percent.

These percentages suggest that traditional skills remain the core of copy editing classes. They also indicate that not much time is available during editing classes for anything beyond the basics of text editing, headline-writing and design.

Proficiencies

Table 2 is a list of 39 items ordered by the mean responses of professors to the question "How likely are typical editing students at your school to become proficient in the following at the time they graduate?" The table shows a fairly complex array of proficiencies and ranks ordered from most likely to least likely.

Grouping the proficiency items into broader sets of skills yields a somewhat clearer picture. Ordered roughly from highest to lowest, broad categories are:

1. Fact-checking (whether by the Web, references or sources)
2. Computer competencies (fitting headlines and using Quark and Photoshop)
3. Word editing
4. Display type (Headline and caption writing)
5. Editing of packages and series
6. Web-production skills
7. Multimedia skills.

Sprinkled throughout are organizational skills (meeting deadlines, thinking independently, planning coverage with others and coaching).

Proficiencies that would appear to reflect media convergence (designing Web pages and knowledge of multimedia) generally rank at the very bottom, even lower than earlier production proficiencies such as character-counting headlines, which has not been done at most newspapers since the late '70s, and cropping and scaling photos by hand, which is done rarely given the near ubiquity of digital imaging in U.S. daily newsrooms.[31]

The message in this table seems to be that students are graduating with traditional editing and headline-writing skills and knowledge of the typical computer applications used in newsrooms. To a lesser degree, they are graduating with organizational skills. And to a much lower degree, Web production and multimedia skills.

Skills on the job

Table 3 offers another way to look at the issue of competencies, this time in terms of skills copyeditors need on the job. Sixteen skill items were factor-analyzed using principal components analysis and Varimax rotation to see whether ostensibly related skills vary together. Four factors emerged, the first (Factor 1) a versatility factor, with high loadings on a range of technical competencies and on reporting ability. Factor 2 also reflected a variety of skills but centered more on traditional text-editing skills, including having solid background knowledge. Critical thinking and interpersonal skills also had high loadings on this factor. Factor 3 appears to be an organizational factor, with high loadings for teamwork and interpersonal skills. Factor 4 was a production factor, with high loadings on page design and headline-writing. It also had a high negative loading for video.

Table 4 shows an analysis of professionals' responses to the same 16 items based on the earlier survey. Four factors emerged in this analysis as well, though the makeup of the factors was somewhat different from those that emerged in the analysis of professors' responses. Factor 1 was a traditional copy editing factor, much as Factor 2 was in the analysis of professors. But headline writing also loaded highly on Factor 1, which suggests that professionals think of headline-writing as part of the same skill set as editing while professors may associate it more closely with design. Factor 2 was a technical versatility factor, though not as broad-based as in the professors' survey. Video also loaded highly on this factor. Factor 3 was similar to that in the first analysis, and Factor 4 was a design-production factor.

Table 5 compares means on the skill items between the professors and professionals. It shows considerable agreement between the academy and the profession on the type of skills copy editors spend most of their time using (word editing, headline-writing, deadline and organizational skills. Professors, however, rank coaching, reporting, page design, Quark pagination, Photoshop, graphics and internet skills fairly or very important, too. Neither group reports that video/audio skills (perhaps the key skills in a media convergence environment) are very important.

The t-tests in Table 5 show that many of the differences are significant, though some of the differences are not very large. Charts put the differences more in perspective. Figure 1 shows the professors' responses and those of the professionals across all circulation categories. The lines are essentially similar in the categories that reflect traditional skills in word-editing and headline-writing, background knowledge and organizational skills. They diverge in page design, graphics and reporting skills as well as in a variety of technology skills, such as knowledge of Photoshop and Quark. Figure 2 shows how the professors compared with professionals at smaller papers (those of less than 100,000 circulation). The differences between page design and Quark ability practically disappear, and the differences between professors and professionals on the need for copy editors to have coaching and reporting skills decrease too. The lines converge further if only papers of less than 50,000 circulation are considered (not shown).

Conclusion

Professors at ACEJMC-accredited programs appear to believe that traditional skills, reflecting text editing, headline-writing and design, remain fundamental, which should come as little surprise. The need for those skills, particularly those involving word editing, is long established, and whatever form news presentation takes, those skills no doubt will remain crucial. Headline-writing and design, too, are considered very important skills, though less time is spent in class on them.

The data on proficiencies students are likely to have and the skills they need for jobs also indicate that those traditional skills are important, but they also show that skills that have emerged in recent decades also have become essential. Those include technology competencies, such as ability to use QuarkXpress and the Web, and organizational abilities, such as interpersonal and teamwork skills. Looking at the range of possible proficiencies that can be taught and the time that is now devoted to traditional skills, one might conclude that anecdotal reports are correct – there aren't enough minutes in the class to do everything that professors think should be done.

Comparing professors and professionals on skills shows that there is considerable agreement on a number of traditional and technology skills and disagreement on the need for a number of others. The data show that unlike professionals, professors seem to feel their students need it all – editing, reporting, technology, organizational and a variety of Web skills. The professors appear to reflect the view of professionals at smaller papers, where copy editors often do need to have it all. Larger papers have larger staffs and can afford greater specialization in jobs. In effect, then, professors seem to be closer to professionals at papers that are more likely to hire students out of college. Perhaps instructors also are more likely to encourage flexibility in their students to better prepare them for the job market.

One interesting finding is where headline skills fit into the picture. To the professors, headline-writing falls into a design factor; to professionals, it goes with story editing. The difference might in effect be a "Quark effect." In many classroom situations and at many small papers, copy editors do most of their work in Quark – design, headline-writing, and sometimes even text editing. At larger papers, copy editors tend to edit and write headlines on front-end systems, and designers spend their day designing pages on Quark or other systems.

This study suggests that professors and professionals are largely in agreement about how to prepare students for traditional print newsroom technology. The data also suggest that neither group feels that preparation for a multimedia future is particularly crucial at this point, though professors appear to be more comfortable with one key convergence skill – video – than their counterparts in print newsrooms are. One is tempted to conclude that the professors are actually closer to the cutting edge. The data here are merely suggestive, though. A different picture might well emerge if professors were compared with professionals in online newspaper newsrooms.

It would seem to be good news that professors and professionals are largely on the same page. Whether it is the right page is an issue beyond the scope of this study. Using the categories mentioned above, one might say that students are in good shape as far as the past and present go in copy editing but that the future is somewhat cloudy.

Table 1: Percentage of class time spent on several fundamental skill areas

Skill area	**Basic** (N=68)	**Advanced** (N=30)
Grammar, spelling, punctuation, style	29.3	11.5
Text editing (other than grammar, etc.)	31.3	26.0
Headline-writing	16.5	16.5
Design	14.7	33.8
Other	11.2	13.2

Table 2: Proficiencies of editing students at graduation

(1="very unlikely to be proficient" to 5="very likely")

Proficiency	Mean	St. Dev.
Using the Web to verify or provide info	4.13	1.04
Using a computer to fit headlines	4.12	1.21
Meeting deadlines	4.08	.92
Reading copy for grammar, punc., style, facts	4.03	.85
Editing for cultural and gender sensitivity	3.95	.96
Writing headlines	3.91	1.04
Using print reference material	3.89	1.11
Alerting supervisors to legal, ethical problems	3.83	1.08
Designing pages by computer (Quark)	3.83	1.19
Thinking independently, taking initiative	3.71	1.07
Reorganizing local copy	3.67	.99
Cropping and scaling by computer (Photoshop)	3.67	1.23
Calling a source to verify info	3.62	1.27
Shortening local copy	3.61	1.00
Writing cutlines	3.60	1.10
Editing a breakout box or infographic	3.55	1.15
Creating a breakout box or pull quote	3.55	1.15
Going to a news scene to collect facts	3.52	1.49
Discussing questions with the reporter	3.52	1.13
Shortening wire copy	3.40	1.17
Editing a local package	3.40	1.07
Discussing questions with an editor	3.29	1.14
Reorganizing a wire story	3.25	.94
Planning coverage with editors, reporters, designers	3.20	1.23
Counting headlines by hand	3.12	1.50
Editing a local series	3.06	1.14
Designing pages with paper dummies	3.00	1.40
Assembling and editing a wire package	2.97	1.09
Editing a wire series	2.91	1.14
Helping to coach reporters	2.88	1.05
Cropping and scaling photos by hand	2.88	1.42
Creating an infographic	2.73	1.12
Preparing copy for the Web	2.59	1.14
Editing long-form, narrative or literary journalism	2.54	1.11
Editing original copy for the Web	2.52	1.17
Designing a Web news page	2.41	1.22
Preparing news copy for broadcast	2.08	1.10
Editing video	1.59	.94
Preparing broadcast copy for a Web page	1.52	.84

Table 3: Skills and factor loadings (professors)

Skill	**Factor 1**	**Factor 2**	**Factor 3**	**Factor 4**
Word-editing	-.019	**.583**	-.260	.396
Headlines, captions	.213	.068	.213	**.761**
Page design	**.587**	.059	.110	**.577**
Reporting	**.927**	.158	.045	-.130
Quark, pagination	**.794**	.196	.064	.203
Photoshop	**.927**	.158	.045	-.130
Graphics	**.802**	-.010	.182	.237
Internet	**.534**	.396	-.019	057
Video and/or audio	.326	.024	.234	**-.551**
Teamwork	.120	.239	**.800**	.158
Coaching	.074	.122	**.805**	-.127
Interpersonal	.000	**.547**	**.594**	.134
Time mgt./deadline	.093	**.698**	.245	.037
General knowledge	.317	**.664**	.301	.120
Current events	.267	**.714**	.194	-.095
Critical thinking	.099	**.842**	.170	-.033
Percent variance explained	**34.9**	**15.2**	**9.6**	**8.0**

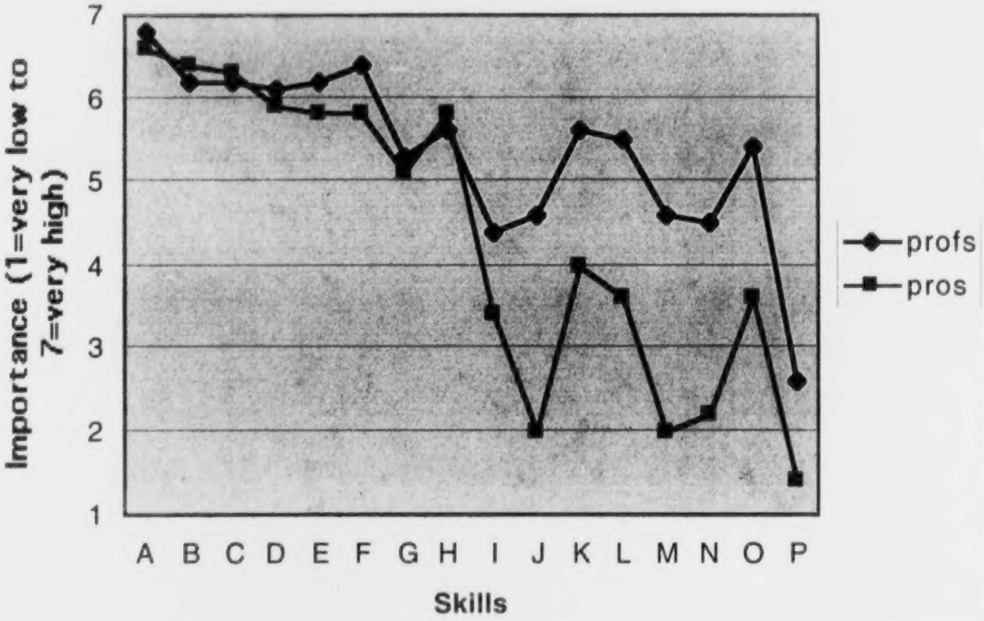
Table 4: Skills and factor loadings (professionals)

Skill	**Factor 1**	**Factor 2**	**Factor 3**	**Factor 4**
Word-editing	**.792**	-.228	.137	.024
Headlines, captions	**.788**	.042	.026	.106
Page design	.000	.232	.093	**.886**
Reporting	-.180	**.856**	.034	.283
Quark, pagination	.043	.230	.128	**.879**
Photoshop	-.180	**.856**	.034	.283
Graphics	.028	**.721**	-.023	.359
Internet	.207	.483	.413	-.115
Video and/or audio	.003	**.715**	.156	-.052
Teamwork	.218	.051	**.841**	.133
Coaching	.221	.205	**.703**	.118
Interpersonal	.350	.027	**.816**	.029
Time mgt./deadline	**.658**	-.099	.394	.221
General knowledge	**.848**	.018	.262	-.122
Current events	**.853**	-.010	.236	-.019
Critical thinking	**.805**	.010	.305	-.106
Percent variance explained	**32.9**	**23.9**	**8.3**	**7.0**

Table 5: Skills (professionals and professors)

Skill	Means		t	p
	Profs	Pros		
Word-editing	6.8	6.6	- 2.01	.046
Headlines, captions	6.2	6.4	1.50	.134
Time mgt./deadline	6.2	6.3	0.35	.723
General knowledge	6.1	5.9	- 1.63	.105
Current events	6.2	5.8	- 1.74	.083
Critical thinking	6.4	5.8	- 3.05	.002
Teamwork	5.6	5.8	1.26	.209
Page design	5.6	4.0	- 6.39	.000
Quark, pagination	5.5	3.6	- 6.98	.000
Internet	5.4	3.6	- 7.27	.000
Interpersonal	5.3	5.1	- 0.87	.384
Reporting	4.6	2.0	-11.76	.000
Photoshop	4.6	2.0	-11.76	.000
Graphics	4.5	2.2	-10.09	.000
Coaching	4.4	3.4	- 3.95	.000
Video and/or audio	2.6	1.4	- 7.05	.000

Figure 1: Importance of Skills: Professors and Professionals (all circulation categories)

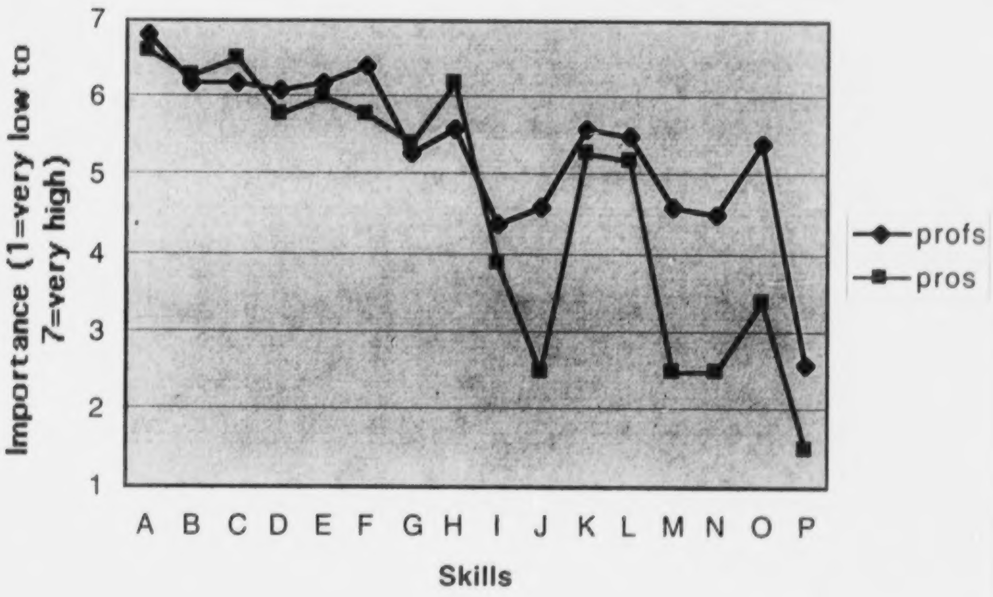


A – Word-editing
B – Headlines, captions
C – Time mgt./deadline
D – General knowledge
E – Current events
F – Critical thinking

G – Interpersonal
H – Teamwork
I – Coaching
J – Reporting
K – Page design
L – Quark, pagination

M – Photoshop
N – Graphics
O – Internet
P – Video /audio

Figure 2: Importance of Skills: Professors and Professionals (<100,000 circulation)



A – Word-editing
B – Headlines, captions
C – Time mgt./deadline
D – General knowledge
E – Current events
F – Critical thinking
G – Interpersonal
H – Teamwork
I – Coaching
J – Reporting
K – Page design
L – Quark, pagination
M – Photoshop
N – Graphics
O – Internet
P – Video /audio

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[1] The American Society of Newspaper Editors report on credibility states: "The public sees too many factual errors and spelling or grammar mistakes in newspapers." It continues, "Essentially, readers don't care whether the reporter was rushed, or that the staff was down three people, or if the copy editor was too busy laying out pages to catch misuses of the common language." The American Society of Newspaper Editors, "Examining Our Credibility," The American Editor, January 1999, p. 7.

[2] William G. Christ, Jeffrey M. McCall, Lana Rakow and Robert O. Blanchard, "Integrated Communication Programs," p. 39, in Christ, ed., Media Education Assessment Handbook, Lawrence Erlbaum (Mahwah, N.J.) 1997.

[3] See, for example, William G. Christ, "Defining Media Education," in Christ, ed., Media Education Assessment Handbook; Robert O. Blanchard and William G. Christ, Media Education and the Liberal Arts: A Blueprint for the New Professionalism, Lawrence Erlbaum, Hillsdale, N.J., 1993; Jeffrey McCall, "Student Occupational Concerns in a Liberal Arts Program," in William G. Christ, ed., Leadership in Times of Change, Lawrence Erlbaum, Mahwah, N.J., 1999, p. 279-293.

[4] See, for example, Betty Medsger, Winds of Change: Challenges Confronting Journalism Education, The Freedom Forum, Arlington, Va., 1996.

[5] Tom Dickson and Wanda Brandon, "The Gap Between Educators and Profesional Journalists," Journalism and Mass Communication Educator, Autumn 2000, p. 50-67.

[6] William G. Christ and Terry Hynes, "The Missions and Purposes of Journalism and Mass Communication Education," Journalism and Mass Communication Educator, Summer 1997, p. 74-90.

[7] Christ and Hynes, "The Missions and Purposes..." p. 84-85.

[8] Christ and Hynes in "The Missions and Purposes..." found that most programs (68.7 percent) mentioned that they prepare students for specific media industries.

[9] Lana F. Rakow, "The Curriculum Is the Future," Journal of Communication, Autumn 1993, 154-162, p. 156.

[10] John Pavlik, "Transforming Journalism Education," in Roland De Wolk, Introduction to Online Journalism, Boston: Allyn & Bacon, 2001, p. 40-44.

[11] Steve Outing, "It's Not Your Father's Newsroom," http://www.editorandpublisher.com/ephome/news/newshtm/stop/st122000.htm.

[12] John Pavlik, "Information Technology: Implications for the Future of Journalism and Mass Communication Education," http://newmedia.Colorado.EDU/links/pages/24.html.

[13] By the end of 2000, video was not a staple of most web sites, because of bandwidth issues and problems of delivering video over phone lines. Streaming video was making inroads, but for the vast majority of web sites, video was an add-on, not fundamental to the message, as it is in television.

[14] Lewis A. Friedland and Sheila Webb, "Incorporating Online Publishing into the Curriculum," Journalism and Mass Communication Educator, Autumn 1996, p. 54-65; Robert Huesca, "reinventing Journalism Curricula for the Electronic Environment," Journalism and Mass Communication Educator, Summer 2000, p. 4-15.

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[15] Arthur Sulzberger Jr., speech to Editor & Punblisher's 12th annual Interactive Newspapers Conference and Trade Show, Dallas, Texas, Feb. 22, 2001. The text of his remarks is available at http://www.nytco.com/financial/man.prs.eandp.htm

[16] See, for example, Christopher Harper, "Doing It All," American Journalism Review, December 1996, p. 24-29.

[17] See, for example, the package of articles in The American Editor, July 2000 on convergence at the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel and the Tampa Tribune. Stories available at http://www.asne.org/kiosk/editor/00.july/convergence1.htm

[18] See, for example, Paul Farhi, "The Dotcom Brain Drain," American Journalism Review, March 2000, p. 30-33, and J.D. Lasica, "Attracting Young Talent to the Web," American Journalism Review, May 1999, p. 84.

[19] Ann Auman and Betsy B. Alderman, "How Editors and Educators See Skills Needed for Editing," Newspaper Research Journal, Winter-Spring 1996, p. 2-13.

[20] Ann Auman, "A Lesson for Instructors: Top 10 Copy-Editing Skills," Journalism and Mass Communication Educator, Autumn 1995, p 12-22.

[21] John Russial, "Mixed Messages About Pagination and Other Skills," Newspaper Research Journal, Winter 1995, p. 60-70.

[22] John Russial and Wayne Wanta, "Digital Imaging and the Hiring and Training of Photojournalists," Journalism and Mass Communications Quarterly (1998) Autumn, 593-604.

[23] See, for example, Buck Ryan, "Editing Takes on a New Look," Quill, March 1993, p. 19-24; Kathleen A. Hansen, Mark Neuzil and Jean Ward, "Newsroom Topic Teams: Journalists Assessments of Effects on News Routines and Newspaper Quality," Journalism and Mass Communications Quarterly, Winter, 1998, p. 803-821. John T. Russial, "Topic Team Performance: A Content Study," Newspaper Research Journal, Winter-Spring 1997, p. 126-144.

[24] Ann Auman, "Seeing the Big Picture: The Integrated Editor of the 1990s," Newspaper Research Journal, Winter 1995, p. 35-47; David Craig, "Cross-Training, Rotation Leads to Less Stress," The American Editor, January 1998, p. 16-17.

[25] Ann Auman, "Design Desks: Why Are More and More Newspapers Adopting Them?" Newspaper Research Journal, Spring 1994, p. 128-144.

[26] David Zeeck, "Leadership vs. Management," The American Editor, September 1997, p. 4-7.

[27] Auman, 1995, p. 21.

[28] The schools that responded represented a wide range of enrollment – from 60 to 1,200 undergraduates.

[29] One contact was chosen for each paper sampled and two, three or four surveys sent to that person, depending on size of paper. In most cases, the contact was a copyediting supervisor (a copy chief or a news editor) whose name was listed in the 1998 Editor & Publisher International yearbook or in the membership list of the American Copy Editors Society. As of 1999, ACES numbered about 1,000 members representing several hundred papers. The contact was asked to fill out one survey and pass the other or others on to copy editors or a supervisor who fit the following criteria: If a supervisor, he or she was asked to give the other survey to a copy editor without supervisory responsibilities. In larger papers, supervisors were asked to give copies to non-supervisors in different departments. The sample did not include papers of less than

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15,000 circulation. Jobs held by copy editors at those papers are somewhat similar to those at larger papers, but they are dissimilar in important ways. Relatively small dailies, for example, typically lack the specialized job descriptions and level of editorial organization of larger papers. Auman and Alderman note that some editors of small papers failed to respond to a survey in 1995, writing that they were too small to have copy editor positions. Ann Auman and Betsy Alderman, "How Educators and Editors See Skills Needed for Editing,"Newspaper Research Journal, Winter-Spring 1996, p. 2-13.
Because the number of news staff members, including copy editors, increases with circulation size, it was assumed that roughly the same number of copy editors would be working in each group. Within each category, papers were randomly selected according to the following schedule:

Circulation category	**Papers sampled**	**Surveys/ paper**
350,000 and up	18	4
150-350	25	3
50-150,000	38	2
15-50,000.	36	2

The sample contained from 72 to 76 subjects in each of the four groups for a total of 295.

[30] Responses were somewhat skewed by circulation group. The number of responses ranged from a high of 59 surveys in the 150,000-350,000 group to a low of 24 from the 15,000-50,000 group, primarily on the lower end of the range, even with additional effort made to get those returns.

[31] Russial and Wanta, "Digital Imaging and the Hiring and Training of Journalists."

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Convenient Excuses?

Jobs, Classes, And Misconceptions Limit JMC Students' Involvement In Major

By Betsy Alderman and Fred Fedler

A paper presented to the Newspaper Division of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication in Washington, D.C. in August 2001.

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Convenient Excuses?

Jobs, Classes, And Misconceptions Limit JMC Students' Involvement In Major

Why don't more journalism and mass communication (JMC) students join professional organizations, attend guest lectures, intern, freelance, or work for campus media? Reasons given by some of the students in this study include:

- "In a perfect world, everyone would have all the time they need to do everything expected. In the real world, I am a parent and a husband as well as a student. My financial responsibilities take precedence over extracurricular activities and clubs."
- "I have three jobs to stay in school and little time for anything else."
- "Pulling up my grades, living college life, and earning money. These are the reasons I'm not more involved in professional activities."
- "I feel overwhelmed with school and work. My spare time is spent on my homework and everyday tasks."
- "Bills, bills, bills!"

As faculty members and former professionals, we understand the need to educate our students beyond the classroom. We are familiar with the demands students will encounter in newsrooms, advertising and public relations agencies, and other fields of communication. And we know that giving students opportunities to learn more about the "real working world" will help make them better professionals.

And so we sponsor student chapters of professional organizations. We bring in guest speakers. We encourage students to write for campus newspapers and to work at campus radio stations. We offer internships and help students find part-time jobs related to their majors. And yet, we hear every excuse in the book about why many students can't, won't, or aren't able to participate.

To learn more about the problems, this study focuses primarily on JMC students' involvement -- or lack of involvement -- in their major. Secondarily, this study examines JMC students' knowledge of their major. Some students may be poorly motivated and, therefore, uninvolved because they are unfamiliar with their major and its demands.

This study and others like it can help us, as JMC educators, learn more about our students and how we can help them. This and related studies are also important because, when our graduates do poorly, professionals tend to blame faculty members.[1]

Literature Review

Faculty members regularly study and have written uncounted books and articles about the nation's media and journalists. Although hired primarily to teach, faculty members are less likely to study their students' characteristics, needs, or performance. Yet some questions about the 150,000 students majoring in journalism and mass communication seem important. Why do students select our field as their major? What do they like and dislike about it? What are their problems and goals? Are they different from other students?

PREVIOUS RESEARCH. Weaver and Wilhoit found that most of JMC's faculty members teach three classes a term.[2] Other studies have found that faculty members devote more time to teaching than to research, service, and administration combined.[3]

Faculty members also have gathered some data about JMC students, especially their numbers, majors, and jobs:

- Each fall, *Journalism & Mass Communication Educator* publishes statistics describing the field's enrollment and graduates. Typically, only 50 percent to 60 percent of JMC graduates find jobs with the media. Others continue in school, are unemployed, or find jobs in unrelated fields.[4] Becker and Engleman reported that 26,350 students received bachelor's degrees in 1987, for example, and that about half found jobs with media-related companies.[5] In 1990, Becker and Engleman also found that, "Graduates who worked on campus newspapers and radio and television stations were more likely to find communications-related work than graduates without those experiences."[6] By the start of the 1999-2000 academic year, the number of JMC students had increased to 150,250.[7]

- Bowers found that 55 percent of the journalism students at North Carolina expected to obtain newspaper reporting and editing jobs but that "only 30 percent saw themselves working for newspapers after five years."[8] The statistics suggested that "many journalism students might not be committed to the pursuit of a journalism career." Bowers speculated that uncommitted students may be "less dedicated to the high standards of professionalism traditionally demanded by departments and schools of journalism."[9]

- In 1990, Endres and Wearden found that undergraduates select JMC as a career "primarily because it offers opportunities for promotion and advancement." Undergraduates also mentioned JMC salaries and contributions to society. Endres and Wearden found significant differences by sequence, however, and also that "some students clearly are not getting an accurate portrait of their field."[10]

- In 1993, Becker, Kosicki, Engleman, and Viswanath examined predictors of success in JMC's job market. They found three factors positively associated with finding a job: (1) experience working for college media or at internships, (2) specialization in any area of study, and (3) grade point average.[11]

- In 1999, Becker, *et. al.* found that "three in 10 bachelor's degree recipients said they wished they had prepared for another career, and another 5.5 percent said

> they never intended to go into journalism."[12] Becker *et. al.* also found that only one in 20 of the graduates who found jobs expected to spend their entire careers with their first employer. Moreover, only one in five expected to retire in their current occupation.

Other researchers have examined the JMC job market, salaries, and requirements. Mistaken perceptions about any of those issues could affect students' decisions to become involved in their major – or to remain uninvolved.

THE JOB MARKET. JMC's job market varies with the economy. During bad times, such as a recession in the early 1990s, newspaper closures and layoffs send even experienced journalists scrambling for jobs.[13]

Becker, Stone, and Graf calculated that there are 3.29 new graduates for every entry-level job in radio, 4.18 graduates for every entry-level job at newspapers, and 9.9 graduates for every entry-level job in television.[14] The situation improved when Becker, Stone, and Graf looked at only highly qualified graduates, those who: (1) specialized in the relevant curriculum, (2) interned for the relevant medium, and (3) worked for the relevant campus medium.[15]

Graduates' difficulty in finding entry-level jobs can be aggravated by a stagnant market.[16] By 1998, the number of newspapers had declined to 1,489, down from 1,772 in 1950.[17] Partly because of that decline, the total professional work force at newspapers peaked at 56,900 in 1990.[18]

SALARIES. JMC graduates also face low salaries. The situation is so serious that the Society of Professional Journalists considered changing its Code of Ethics "to allow entry-level journalists to hold second jobs."[19]

Small dailies are most likely to hire new graduates and, in 1994, the editors at 43 of 82 small dailies surveyed said they paid new graduates less than $16,000 a year. Thirty-six said they paid new graduates between $16,000 and $19,999. Only three paid more than $20,000.[20]

JMC graduates continued to earn low salaries even as the economy boomed during the late 1990s. In 1996-97, the average starting salary for journalism graduates was $22,102, and that was "dead last" among 30 academic majors surveyed by the Collegiate Employment Research Institute at Michigan State University.[21] Small dailies paid even less: an average of $16,564 in 1997.[22] By 1999, the median salary for bachelor's degree recipients had increased only modestly, to $25,000.[23]

TESTING. JMC graduates also face tests and tryouts. Sixty-eight percent of the small and mid-sized papers Smith surveyed used written tests, and 39 percent used short-term tryouts. Why? Smith concluded that, "Editors do not believe that a college degree in journalism ensures them that the applicant has obtained the basic skills needed to be a journalist."[24] Hipsman and Wearden, too, found more newspapers testing applicants, apparently because editors believe "journalism educators aren't doing a decent job and that entry-level applicants, at least, lack basic skills." Fifty-six percent of the dailies Hipsman and Wearden surveyed tested applicants.[25] Typically, the tests covered grammar, punctuation, spelling, writing, and reporting skills.[26]

WHAT PROFESSIONALS WANT. Haroldsen found that news executives "have pretty definite ideas about what they expect in new employees: intelligence, dedication, a broad education, practical experience, writing ability, and other skills."[27] Similarly, a national survey conducted by the American Society of Newspaper Editors found that editors with entry-level positions considered good writing skills most important, followed by spelling and grammar skills, then internships.[28]

Other studies have found that editors consider grade point averages important. In addition, editors want applicants who can perform well under deadline pressure and who have solid experience on a good college newspaper, at an internship, or at a part-time job.[29]

JMC's other fields, too, require experience and good writing skills.[30] Television news directors look for applicants with internships or other work experience. Forty-two percent of the nation's news editors "cite writing skills as one of their top priorities."[31] Magazine editors, too, demand good language and grammar training.[32]

Practitioners and faculty members in other fields of communication agree that strong writing skills are essential. In their widely-used textbook, "Effective Public Relations," Cutlip, Center, and Broom comment, "Bosses expect practitioners to be strong writers, persuasive speakers, and to have a great deal of knowledge about the mass media industry, the management process, and how to read a financial report."[33]

There is a consistency on all those points: on students' apparent reasons for selecting JMC as a major, on the number of jobs available for JMC graduates, on the field's salaries, and on professionals' expectations of new graduates. But are students familiar with that information -- and do they act accordingly?

Methodology

To learn more about JMC students' involvement in professional activities, the authors asked students at seven universities about their work for campus media, their internships, and their attendance at department events. Students also were asked what they believe employers consider most important when hiring new graduates.

To obtain that information (and to determine the relationship between students' attitudes, demographics, and other variables) the authors developed a questionnaire containing 26 questions. The questions included, for example:

- How many media/communication related groups have you joined? (Groups such as the Society of Professional Journalists, Kappa Tau Alpha, PRSSA, Women in Communication, etc.)
- Do you work for your campus newspaper or television or radio station? Why?
- If a panel of local professionals appeared on campus next week to discuss current issues in your field, how likely would you be to attend?
- If you missed this event, what would be your primary reasons?

In addition, the authors asked demographic and personal questions like these:

- How many credits do you enroll in during a typical term?
- About how far do you commute one-way to campus each day?
- About how many hours do you work each week at a job while attending college?
- As a college student, what is your primary source of financial support?

We pretested the questionnaire in several classes at two universities, then used a convenience sample at seven schools. We sent the survey to a contact person (faculty member) and asked that person to administer the questionnaire in JMC courses. The schools that participated included the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga, University of Central Florida, Virginia Tech, Middle Tennessee University, University of Nebraska at Kearney, Murray State University, and Marshall University.

Results

The authors collected more than 1,000 surveys. After culling out students who were not JMC or closely related majors, and surveys that were incomplete or lacked enough information to be helpful, the sample included 758 students.

Of those 758 students, 63.1 percent were female and 36.9 percent male. Thirty-nine percent were juniors, 29.3 percent seniors, 23.0 percent sophomores, and 7.3 percent freshmen. Almost 83 percent were Caucasian, 7.5 percent African-American, and 5.3 percent Hispanic.

The most popular JMC sequences for respondents included journalism, mass communication (or communication), public relations, broadcasting (including production), and advertising. Fewer than 1 percent of the respondents listed communication studies, media management, sports communication, or other related majors.

The largest minor represented was marketing, with 13.5 percent (74) of the respondents. The remainder of the minors were spread among political science, psychology, foreign languages, and others.

Sixty-nine percent (516) of the respondents reported that they had between a 2.51 and 3.5 grade point average. Another 19.1 percent had a 3.51 gpa or higher. By comparison, only 1.6 percent had less than a 2.0. Most also said they were "very likely" or "somewhat likely" (67.1 percent and 21 percent respectively) to seek a full-time job in their major when they graduate.

LACK OF TIME. Ninety-two percent (699) of the respondents reported taking 12 to 16 hours of class credit during a typical term, and many added that their classes left little time for anything else. "Free time is a rare thing," one senior wrote. "When I'm not in class, I'm working on completing school work or reading." A junior added, "I'd rather have time to study and do well in my classes (than become involved in my major)."

Several students said they preferred other activities, such as Greek life or student government, to activities in their major. "I'm very busy being active in my sorority, SGA, and a lot of other activities," one sophomore wrote. "I just don't have time to do anything else."

JOBS. When asked their primary source of financial support, 37.2 percent (275) of the respondents said "Jobs," 32.4 percent said "Parents," 15.1 percent said "Loans," 9.7 percent said

"Scholarships," and 3.2 percent said "Savings."

Although only 37.2 percent said jobs were their primary source of financial support, nearly four out of five worked during the school year. The greatest percentage – 56.1 – worked 11 to 30 hours a week (See Table I).

Table I

Average Hours Worked Per Week	Percentage of Students
0	20.6%
1 to 10	9.7%
11 to 20	31.0%
21 to 30	25.1
31 to 40	10.7
More than 40	2.8

Thus, nearly 40 percent of the students in your classes are likely to be working at least half time: 21 or more hours a week. And between classes and work, literally hundreds of students said they did not have enough time to become more involved in their majors' activities.

"I work five to six nights a week, usually eight-hour shifts," a male junior said. "I realize the importance of my education, but a guy has to eat also." Another male said: "I'm already trying to do too many things at once. If you have to work full-time to get through school, it is really difficult to get involved (with your major's activities)."

A female junior added: "My full-time commitment is as a single parent. I have the desire (to be involved) but not the time." Similarly, a sophomore said: "I just had a baby. She's my first child, so I don't have time." And a male junior said, "No time – I need to work because I need to support myself."

Some students said they planned to become more involved after they finished their core or basic classes. Others admitted they knew that they should become more involved, but simply had not done so. "I plan on becoming more involved," one said. "I am an African-American female and have yet to share an upper-level journalism class with a peer of the same race or gender. This has discouraged me from getting more involved although I understand experience is crucial to a journalism career."

COMMUTING. Only 21 percent of the respondents lived on campus. Fifty-nine percent lived 1 to 10 miles from campus. Another 9.4 percent lived 11 to 20 miles from campus, and 10.2 percent lived 21 or more miles from campus. Several of the respondents with longer commutes said the time they spent traveling prevented them from becoming more involved. Some added that the times groups met and the times other activities were scheduled conflicted with their driving time.

OTHER OBSTACLES. There were also other reasons for students' failure to become involved in their majors. Some students expressed frustration at their inability to obtain information. "There aren't many people on this campus who can answer the questions I have about my major," one female junior said. "I get the run-around by people who are supposed to be here to help."

Other students blamed faculty members and even entire departments. "The department really does not reach out to freshmen and sophomores," a sophomore male said. Similarly, a senior male wrote, "I see lack of organization and drive among students and faculty advisors."

Still other students said the size of their school affected their involvement. "This is a large school, and it's hard to get to know faculty," a male sophomore explained.

PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS. Seventy-four percent (556) of the students reported they had not joined a single professional group. Nineteen percent (142) said they had joined one group, and 6.3 percent had joined two. (Of the seven universities that participated in this study, all had at least one professionally affiliated student group for JMC majors, and some had several.)

Many students said they did not join any professional groups because they did not know how, or that meetings were not well publicized. "I want to become more involved," one female junior wrote. "But I don't know the time and place of things. I think there's a lack of communication (in the department)." Other students suggested making announcements in classes, on flyers, or via e-mail.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE. Only 18.8 percent (142) of the respondents had a part-time job that was off-campus and related to their major. Similarly, only 21.1 percent (159) worked for student media, such as campus newspapers or radio or television stations.

Yet students who worked for campus media said the experience was very worthwhile. "I not only have fun, but I get to meet other students and learn too," said a female junior who worked for a campus newspaper. Another student looked at his experience at a campus radio station in a more practical way. "It's better to screw up now than later," the male sophomore wrote. And a female senior said, "I enjoy the leadership opportunities available to me (at the campus radio station) and the forum for learning new things."

Students were consistent in the reasons they gave for not working for campus media. Each respondent was given a list and asked to mark his or her three primary reasons. (The list of potential reasons was based upon the authors' 48 years of experience as faculty members, upon discussions with students in current classes, and upon the questionnaire's pretest.)

The respondents' four primary reasons included "No time," "Must work, earn money," "Will in future," and "Conflict with class" (See Table II. The percentages in Table II total more than 100 because each respondent was given three choices.)

Table II

Reasons Why Students Had Not Worked For Campus Media

53.2%	No time
46.5%	Must work, earn money
46.0%	Will in future
32.6%	Conflict with class
22.8%	Inexperienced/unprepared
10.0%	No jobs available
9.0%	Don't see need to
8.7%	Undecided about career
8.1%	Too intimidated/afraid
7.8%	Not a requirement
4.2%	Dislike/don't respect
2.8%	Unrelated to major

Only 11.5 percent of the respondents explained that they were undecided about their major or that work for campus media was unrelated to their major. Freshmen and sophomores might logically feel too inexperienced or unprepared (the respondents' reason No. 5), but should 9 percent of any department's students believe there is no need to work for campus media? Or, should 8.1 percent feel intimidated?

The respondents were asked to list other reasons for their failure to work for campus media, and a female senior wrote: "When I did try to become more involved with the newspaper, I did not feel welcome. I let them get to me, and I regret it, big time!"

INTERNSHIPS. Although 81.5 percent (613) of the respondents said they had not completed an internship, 61.7 percent (364) said they intended to complete an internship before they graduated. Once again, the students were consistent when asked why they had not yet completed an internship. Their four primary reasons included: "Will in future," "Attend classes full time," "Must work, earn money," and "No time." Thus, three of the respondents' primary reasons why they had not completed an internship were identical to the reasons they had not worked for campus media.

Again, students were asked to list additional reasons, and a female senior wrote, "I have been offered two internships, both unpaid, and I absolutely cannot afford it." (See Table III. The percentages in Table III total more than 100 because each respondent was given three choices.)

Table III

Reasons Why Students Had Not Completed An Internship

61.7%	Will in future
41.4%	Attend classes full time
34.0%	Must work, earn money
23.6%	No time
21.7%	Know little about
16.3%	Feel unprepared
13.2%	New transfer to this school
10.2%	No opportunities
6.1%	Too hard to find
6.1%	Undecided about career
4.6%	Not a requirement
4.4%	Too intimidated/afraid
3.6%	Want vacation
2.0%	Have had an internship
1.9%	Feel no need
1.9%	Will never work in major

OTHER EVENTS. Students then were asked how likely they would be to attend other professional and social events on campus:

1. Eighty-six percent (651) said they would be "very likely" or "somewhat likely" to attend a speech by a professional discussing entry-level jobs.
2. Eighty percent (605) would be "very likely" or "somewhat likely" to attend a panel of local professionals discussing current issues in their field.
3. Seventy percent (525) would be "very likely" or "somewhat likely" to attend a department reception at the beginning of the school year.

Why would students miss any of the events? Seventy-three percent (539) of the respondents said they might miss one of the events because of a "conflict with work/class." Twelve percent (88) said they might miss panels and speakers because they had no time. Others said they did not see a need to participate, or that they simply did not want to.

KNOWLEDGE OF THEIR FIELD. Students tended to be realistic when asked about what professionals expect at job interviews. Almost 94 percent of the respondents thought they would be asked for samples of their work, and 92.4 percent thought potential employers might try them out or give them some work to do. Sixty-eight percent thought potential employers also might test them.

Students were less well-informed when asked what traits professionals consider most important when hiring new graduates. Students thought that personal traits, such as enthusiasm and good work habits ("timeliness, good attitude, willingness to learn, etc.") were more important than good writing skills and practical experience. Students also considered their knowledge of computers more important than good writing skills and experience at campus media. Of 13 items, internships ranked seventh and work for campus media twelfth.

Some respondents (perhaps broadcast majors hoping to become television anchors) thought that even their appearance was more important than letters of recommendation, a strong background in the arts and sciences, or work for campus media. Students considered their major, too, relatively unimportant, ranking it eighth (See Table IV).

Table IV

Characteristic	Very Import.	Somewhat Import.	Import.	Not very Import.	Unimport.	Rank*
Good work habits	65.3%	28.8%	3.9%	1.2%	0.6%	1. (94.1%)
Enthusiasm	58.3	32.9	6.5	1.4	0.6	2. (91.2)
Knowledge of computers	40.2	40.9	16.6	2.0	0.2	3. (89.2)
Writing skills	55.0	32.1	10.3	2.1	0.5	4. (87.1)
Knowledge of grammar spelling, punctuation	56.2	30.2	9.8	3.0	0.8	5. (86.4)
Knowledge of com ethics and law	35.6	39.9	20.9	3.0	0.6	6. (75.5)
Internships	33.2	41.8	20.2	4.1	0.0	7. (75.0)
College major	40.0	33.8	21.1	4.1	0.9	8. (73.8)
Appearance	29.8	41.3	22.0	4.3	2.1	9. (71.1)
Strong letters of recommendation	20.3	42.2	30.5	6.1	0.9	10. (62.5)
Broad background in arts and sciences	13.4	28.5	35.4	19.3	3.0	11. (41.9)
Work for campus media	10.3	27.6	39.4	18.6	4.1	12. (37.9)
Work experience in unrelated fields	4.7	11.8	34.4	40.1	9.0	13. (16.5)

*Each characteristic's rank was determined by adding the number of respondents who considered it either "very" or "somewhat" important.

CONFIDENCE AND SALARY EXPECTATIONS. Despite what appears to be a lack of involvement in their major, 67.4 percent of the respondents felt "very well" or "somewhat well" prepared for a job in their major. Another 29.3 percent were uncertain about how well prepared they were.

Finally, students were asked what salary they expected to earn when they graduated. Answers ranged from a low of $5,000 per year to a high of more than $1 million! Few of the respondents seemed realistic. About 6 percent (45) believed they would earn $30,000 to $40,000 per year, 8 percent (62) students said they would earn $20,000, and 10.9 percent (83) said they would earn $25,000. Most believed they would earn much more.

Correlations

There were several significant relationships among the demographic variables. The further along students were in their course of study, the more likely they were to join a professional group (r = .229). In addition, women were more likely than men to be involved in such groups (r = .111).

Also, the more credit hours students were enrolled in, the more likely they were to be members of a professional group (r = .164). Students who had joined groups also were more likely to realize that this involvement helped prepare them for a job in their major (r = .095).

Not surprisingly, the number of hours students worked each week was related to their grade point average. The more hours worked, the lower their average (r = -.124).

A regression analysis found that, as students enrolled in more class credits the likelihood that they worked for student media declined, although the relationship was barely significant (r = -.072). As students enrolled in more hours, they also tended to be less likely to intern. However, that relationship was not significant.

There were no significant relationships between the number of hours that students worked each week and the likelihood that they had completed an internship or worked for student media. Unexpectedly, students who worked the most hours tended to be the most – not least – likely to work for student media.

Other variables, such as the distance of a commute, did not have a significant statistical relationship with the number of media-related groups students joined or with how well prepared students felt for a job upon graduation.

Thus, there were fewer significant relationships than expected, especially between students' course and work loads and their involvement in professional activities. Students said they were too busy to become involved professionally because of their course and work loads, yet this study found little evidence to support that claim.

Discussion And Conclusions

The results of this study paint a fairly clear picture of JMC majors. The answers to the troubling questions are not as obvious.

JMC majors said over and over that, although they understand the demands of the profession, they are simply unable to devote more time to out-of-class activities. Students seemed to sincerely believe that the pressures of class and work prevent them from obtaining all the practical experience professionals recommend. In fact, 92.2 percent of this study's respondents were enrolled full-time, and 79.3 percent worked at least part-time.

Yet if this study's respondents were correct, those who worked the longest hours would logically seem least able to become involved with campus media and also to intern. Inexplicably, this study found that students who worked the longest hours tended to be the most

– not least – likely to work for student media. Moreover, other expected relationships were not significant, or barely significant.

Students may simply be mistaken. Or, students may use their course and work loads as a convenient excuse. Or, other variables may be involved.

In 1990, Endres and Wearden found that "some students clearly are not getting an accurate portrait of their field." This study confirms that conclusion. Students are knowledgeable about some issues, but misinformed about others.

Students know that, when applying for a job, they are likely to be asked for samples of their work, to be tested, and to be tried out. Yet there seems to be a disconnect between what students know and what students do. Eighty-two percent of this study's respondents had not completed an internship, and 78.4 percent had not worked for any campus media -- activities that give students the samples, such as clips, that employers demand.

Students' intentions were good. Forty-six percent said they planned to work for campus media, and 61.7 percent said they planned to complete an internship before they graduated. Clearly, however, many never do.

Students were mistaken about the traits employers consider most important. Professionals in every field of communication say they want good writers, a trait that students ranked fourth. Professionals also want applicants with practical experience, especially internships and experience at campus media. When given a list of 13 possible priorities, students ranked those priorities seventh and twelfth.

JMC students were also mistaken about the salaries they are likely to earn, a misconception that may contribute to their subsequent disillusionment with the field.

Other findings are puzzling. Previous studies have suggested that some students may be unwilling to make the sacrifices JMC demands because they do not expect to work in the field. Eighty-nine percent of this study's respondents said they are "very" or "somewhat" likely to seek a full-time job in their major. Previous studies also found that no more than two-thirds of JMC graduates find jobs in the field of communication. If, as this study found, 89 percent expect to do so, some apparently fail (or change their minds at the last minute). If so, their lack of preparation and involvement may be factor.

This study also revealed other problems. Some students showed a lack of initiative and a tendency to blame others for their problems. Some said they did not join professional groups, for example, because they did not know when or where the groups met. Yet anyone truly interested in a campus group should be able to easily obtain that information by asking a classmate, a department secretary, or a faculty member or two.

Faculty members, too, may be able to do a better job. Faculty members may be able to do a better job of helping publicize activities, and perhaps of finding more convenient times for some activities. Faculty members also may be able to do a better job of explaining activities' importance and of giving students a realistic view of professionals' expectations and salaries. In addition, faculty members can encourage employers to pay interns (and to pay them well).

Finally, many students apparently do only what is required of them. If practical experience is not required, many will not do it regardless of whether that experience is in their best interest. Thus, faculty members who believe that practical experience is essential for JMC majors may have to require it.

Endnotes

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The Aesthetics of Work: A Case Study on How Faculty and Students Negotiate Quality in the Newsroom

A paper presented to the Newspaper Division of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication annual conference on Aug. 5, 2001, in Washington, D.C.

Abstract: This qualitative case study examines the aesthetics of work in a university newsroom. The analysis, based on participant-observation and interviews, shows how student reporters and faculty editors negotiate what will be considered good journalism, good academic performance and good teaching. Both parties are shown to juggle different responsibilities and to make necessary compromises as they strive to define and produce quality work.

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The Aesthetics of Work: A Case Study on How Faculty and Students Negotiate Quality in the Newsroom

The city editor arrives at 9 a.m. She has time to take off her coat and sit down in her office before a reporter comes to her with a question. Some days, three or four reporters might be lined up to touch base with her about their stories for the day. She answers their questions and works with another newsroom staffer to prepare a news budget. Then it's time for the budget meeting, followed by a lunch meeting. Four reporters are waiting for her when she comes back from lunch. In 10 minutes, she answers their questions before going on to the next meeting or two. Then, at 4:30, it's time to edit stories. Perhaps she has read earlier versions, perhaps not. Perhaps the reporter has crafted a solid, well-written story, perhaps not. Perhaps the story will answer all her questions about a new school program, perhaps not. If the story is well-written, she will send it on to the copy desk with no hesitation.

But what will she do if the story is not well-written? What will she do if the story is due at the copy desk within 10 minutes? Are there organizational constraints that affect her ability to do what she considers to be quality work as a city editor? Certainly. However, sociologist Gary Alan Fine suggests workers "have craft standards by which they judge work products and performance that transcend the narrow goals of producing things efficiently and to bureaucratic specification. This connection between the worker and the work is central to the occupational identity of workers" (Fine, 1996, p. 178). An editor is no different from other workers in that regard. Indeed, studies have found that the personal desire for perfection is the No. 1 cause of work-related stress for professional journalists, journalism students (Endres, 1992) and journalism faculty (Endres and Wearden, 1996).

In *The Daily Collegian* newsroom, the city editor, Nancy, confronts questions about the aesthetics of work every day. So do her reporters and her colleagues, indeed everyone in the newsroom. How do they define a good news story? What is a good reporter or a good editor? And what does it mean to be a good student or a good teacher?

This paper will examine, in part, the constraints in this university newsroom that "affect choices and behaviors of workers in their daily routines," as well as how journalism, like all occupations, involves "a concern with 'quality' production and how those standards are negotiated in practice" (Fine, 1996, p. 4). What follows is a qualitative case study of *The Daily Collegian* newsroom (all names have been changed) based on about 20 hours of observations spread over two months, two in-depth interviews and numerous informal interviews in 1998. In addition, the researcher participated as a part-time faculty news editor on the publication's copy desk. The analysis focuses on the interactions between the reporters and their city editors, although it certainly could be extended to all of those who work in the newsroom, including the copy editors and photographers.

I. Defining a good story

The Daily Collegian publishes six days a week. Like most papers, it sells advertising. That advertising constitutes a financial agreement with others that obligates the newspaper to publish news stories – whether or not some objective news exists (Tuchman, 1978, p. 17). Even if there were "nothing happening" in *The Daily Collegian's* circulation area, the paper would be obligated to print some "news." As a result, what constitutes the news must be redefined and renegotiated every day.

Traditionally, news has been defined as involving impact, conflict, novelty, prominence, proximity and timeliness (Baskette et al, 1997). More recently, the definition has been broadened to encompass that which is useful, interesting and relevant (Brooks et al, 1996). At *The Daily Collegian*, one constant is that useful, interesting and relevant means local – at least if one is talking about front-page news. The *Collegian* editors see the paper's niche as local news, and they also have more than 100 reporters to blanket the local community searching for news.

Whether a story is relevant, interesting and useful enough to be on the front page or even in the newspaper is determined every day before publication. In a budget meeting, the editors "bargain but ultimately must reach an accommodation with other editors over resources, especially space in the publication" (Shoemaker and Reese, p. 155). The negotiations often turn on such factors as competition and expectations. Reporters learn how *The Daily Collegian* editors typically define a good story through listening to the editors, participating in and observing the budget meetings, reading the newspaper and reading a daily critique of the paper.

Defining what's news

To the newspaper's then-managing editor, good journalism is more than anything else, "in the broad sense, useful. That is, it tells residents something that readers need to know in a way that gives them at least some tool to play their role as citizens (field notes 3/25)." In practice, useful can mean anything from explaining a school bond issue to explaining what is new about a city phone directory. Relevant means the story is local or has a local connection, and interesting can cover almost everything else. Examples include a story about how grocery stores handled the first chocolate Snackwell's cakes. Nancy recalls the story:

> Well, they had the chocolate ones that nobody, none of the stores, was carrying and everybody was talking about it. So we did a story and we found out that (the grocery stores), all of them were hiding, holding 30 boxes, 30 or 40, for their best customers. So I put that darn thing on the front page, and we got a lot of calls saying, "I always wondered..." That's news. If everybody's talking about it, that's news (field notes 4/16).

That a story on Snackwell's cakes was considered front-page news might not be obvious to everybody, beginning journalist or not. It was determined to be news because "everybody's talking about it," not just in the community, but more important, in the newsroom budget meeting.

Competition and negotiation

Which stories are the most interesting, useful and relevant depends on the competition at various levels. At one level, each locally written story competes for space in the paper with every other possible story. At another level, the city editors are competing to get their individual reporters' work published. If an editor is not there to push for a particular reporter's story, it might not get in the newspaper that day.

Another level of competition involves other media. Which stories are front-page stories depends partly on what the competition has already published or the likelihood the competition will get a story first. During one budget meeting, for example, the editors agree to put a story from the night before on the front page. The story is about the university president testifying in the state capital. "At least I haven't seen it anywhere else," says Henry, the managing editor (field notes 2/18). On another day, an editor suggests putting a story about a murder trial on the front page because "it's on our time" – the competition did not have the story because of its earlier deadlines. The news editor disagrees and quietly notes that the case is only at jury selection. "Would you stop mumbling, Bill," Nancy tells the news editor. "We don't have squat (field notes 3/11)." Her comment illustrates how the standards for news are relative and must be negotiated anew every day -- even among the editors.

Most of the time, the discussions revolve around whether an as-yet-unwritten story is worthy of Page One. Sometimes, even with the story in hand, editors themselves are unsure what makes a front-page story. During one meeting, for example, the editors discuss a story about a religious convention scheduled for the summer. They believe it should be a front-page story, but they don't all agree if the story as written is "good enough." Nancy asks the editor running the meeting: "What do you want to make it on the front?" Editor: "More than what's there." Nancy: "Come on, help me." Later she asks him, "Will you look at this story? I don't know what you want." The editor: "Sure, I'll take a look at it (field notes 2/18)." Sometimes what is good journalism is not even clear to the editors. Nancy's goal is to submit a "good" story for the front page, but she feels the need to negotiate with another editor the aesthetics of story rather than make the determination autonomously.

Types of stories

What often helps the editors make sense of the negotiations is categorizing stories. Stories can be summed up in a few words such as "news you can use," "service journalism," "a meeting story," or "enterprise." The use of those categories can help determine the story's value and placement (Tuchman, 1978, Gans, 1979). At *The Daily Collegian* and other papers, enterprise stories are especially valued. At *The Daily Collegian*, enterprise stories are stories the reporters have thought of themselves and found on their own. Early in the semester, a reporter is asked what she is working on: "An 'enterprise story,' she says. "To get an A in here, you have to do enterprise on every beat (field notes 2/11)." Although one could argue whether she wants to do quality work for its intrinsic value or because she wants a high grade, she clearly wants to please her editors. Her self-generated story on children celebrating the 100th day of school was hardly an expose, but the reporter was publicly praised for her enterprise. By observing the praise, other students will learn more about defining good work.

Although some stories may seem like obvious news stories, "In the beginning ... lots of times even the best students, they just aren't sure because they haven't done this long enough to know," says Henry, the managing editor (field notes 3/25). Reporters learn what the good stories – and what the newspaper's policies -- are, in part, by seeing what lands on the front page and what is placed inside or omitted. Decades ago, Warren Breed (1960) labeled the phenomenon "social control in the newsroom."

In addition to watching the paper, the reporters also learn in interactions with their editors and through the daily public critiques of the newspaper. In their dealings with their editors, Henry says, they begin to sense what is considered to be news:

> ... when our reporters come back (from the field), typically the first thing they're going to do is to talk to their editor and, if not their editor, at least some editor, to report in and to seek direction. And when that reporting occurs, the editor responds, you know, either positively or negatively, and so that provides the first set of clues (field notes 3/25).

The Daily Critique

Besides their one-on-one dealings with editors, *Daily Collegian* reporters also learn through the daily critique. For the students, the critique is another opportunity to see how quality is defined and rewarded. Although the daily critique is viewed by the editor as an important element of his work as a teacher, the critique sometimes has unintended consequences and complicates the learning process, the ongoing negotiations about what is quality work. If students pay attention, they gain insight into what is considered good writing, as well as the times reporters and editors have fallen short. The critique is posted in various places in the newsroom and is also sent electronically to journalism students and faculty. On many days, the critique is used to single out creative writing, and the author provides verbatim examples. "My intention is, in general, to try to provide the deserved pats on the back and the needed reminders of things that weren't done so well," says Henry, who writes the critique (field notes 3/25).

On one day, a story is praised for bringing home "the national trend toward more demand for free food even as the economy soars. This story is a good mix of statistics, explanation and a touch of wisdom." In the same critique, the editor faults another story: "Forum stories that don't allow for the debate and explanation are useless. Exhibit A is our p.1 report on the candidate forum Wednesday night. The story is so choppy and incomplete that readers get no sense of how the conversation went and no understanding of how candidates' views compare." Apparently, somebody learned what kind of useful and relevant news was expected if he or she did not already know. The next day's story is praised as an example of how to correctly cover a forum.

Sometimes the critiques do not seem to have such positive consequences. Instead, they darken the mood throughout the newsroom. Early in the semester, a newspaper reporter found out about an oddball janitor who likes to hide money in the residence halls. She told her editors about this possible feature story but did not work on her story for several weeks. When the time came to do so, she wrote it in a day, putting aside other commitments to get the job done. The next day, her front-page work is publicly critiqued. The story, Henry says:

> wasn't really ready for prime time. The sad thing is that we've been talking about it for weeks. By the time we finally got around to writing it, the (competition) had it. Our version suffers from the classic one-source disease. I like Dave, but when we let him talk on and on about what a wonderful guy he is, he comes across as a blow-hard. WHY DIDN'T WE USE SOME OF THOSE WEEKS TO TALK TO THE STUDENTS HE BEFRIENDS? We'd have had a far better story. As it is, it's not worth the space (field notes 2/11/98).

As one might expect, the reporter took the critique hard. She wrote a response to the managing editor that she shared with her city editor. But the impact of the critique, which asked "Where's a copy editor when you really need one?" went further. It contributed to a student designer/copy editor breaking down in tears because she felt she did not have enough support from her faculty editors. In the budget meeting the same day, a city editor and news editor snapped at each other over which stories were held and why. The city editor had wanted an education story in the paper, but the news editor said there was no space. The editor asks why the copy desk didn't hold the story on Dave, a story that the editor had sent to the copy desk herself. "The front page was already done. We don't design all the pages at one time," the news editor says, explaining to the city editor what she already knows. "The pages are done in stages. There's a process (field notes 2/11)."

In any complicated organization, there must be a process for getting the work done efficiently and producing the product on time. The system puts constraints on what the individuals involved can do and how quality can be defined on any given day. For both reporters and editors, the organizational structure affects how quality is defined and negotiated. When they know they have not done their "best" work, stress and frustration result.

II. The reporters

It is too simplistic to define good reporters by their work, to say good reporters are those who write good stories. What it takes to be a good reporter is learned over the course of a semester. Just as most employees do not receive a letter grade for their work as it is performed, neither do *The Daily Collegian* reporters. Their grade comes at the end of the semester, almost like an annual merit pay raise. In the meantime, they must figure out what is expected of them and what it means to do good work through interactions with their editors and as they compete for resources and juggle other demands. And, not only do the students want to do good work as reporters, but some also want to do good work as students outside the newsroom. Compromises and sacrifices are made as students negotiate the aesthetics of work in and out of the newsroom. Sometimes frustrations arise because of unclear expectations about what is quality work.

The expectations of reporters

The editors realize the students worry about the faculty's expectations. Nevertheless, an editor says she tries to explain to students that, even in the newsroom, they really do know how they are doing. She tells them:

> "You know if your copy is getting better. We're not going to say, 'Oh, you're terrific.' You're not going to hear that in this field. And you're not going to hear it from us, but you know. Where are your stories playing? How many of your stories are on front page, how many are on back page? Are they always on the area (inside) page? How long does it take you to turn a story? All of those things go into your grade. How do you dress? How do you compose yourself? When you're on (general assignments), where are you? Do you ask for stories? Do you hide under the counter? Enterprise -- have you gone to your editor and said, 'I've got a great story idea.' All of those things go into your grade (field notes 4/16)."

But for reporters, questions remain. How much better should their copy be getting? How much time is too long for completing a story? How many stories should be on the front page vs. the inside pages? "I was scared stiff," remembers one reporter. "I didn't get my first article in for two weeks." Even second-semester reporters are sometimes unsure of what and how much they should be doing. A month into the semester, one reporter said he and his classmates were still finding their way (field notes 2/11). A month later, the reporter is still anxious. "My biggest problem ... is we are not told exactly what's expected of us," he says (field notes 3/20/98).

Sometimes even advanced reporters have to ask editors what is a good story and how they should spend their time. Those conversations represent more negotiations over what is quality work and how it is accomplished. One student says he has had conversations with two editors in which he's tried to figure out what he should be doing. He also approached Henry with one of his enterprise ideas; he wanted confirmation that he was working on the right kinds of stories (field notes 2/25).

The reporters face uncertainty because the expectations vary depending on the students and their interactions with their editors. For a C, the students are told they must publish a minimum of 16 stories. But what does it take to earn an A or a B? Is it the number of stories that matters most or the quality of the stories? The students seem unsure, and the editors acknowledge the final grades -- evaluations of the quality of one's work -- are subjective. Nancy gives examples of how students are graded. Of one student, she says:

> It took her, swear to God, two full weeks to write a 6-inch story for the business page. Six inches. And she was in every other day going, "Who else do I call?" And it wasn't one of those I was proud that we sent, but it was the best this kid could do. OK, now where she is, is she doesn't shake anymore. It only takes her

> one week to turn a six-inch story. Her writing is a little bit better. She's gonna end up with a C+ probably ... (Another student) came in with an attitude ... I knew she had talent, but she had an attitude and she was kind of lazy. And I just sat her down and said, "I'm not going to take this. You are good. You just turned a story that is great, so I expect two stories a week from you." OK. And I said, "Shelve that attitude, at least part of it. I like part of it." She ended up with an A because she went (Nancy points straight up) (field notes 4/16).

Acknowledges Henry: "While we tell them the judgments we're making here are necessarily subjective, you can't exactly know what that means until you have it done to you for a while, until you've lived with it (field notes 3/25)." His choice of words is interesting: The evaluations/grades are something that is "done to you," not necessarily something the reporter controls. Quality must be negotiated over the course of the semester.

Competition and negotiations

Complicating the reporters' efforts to understand what is good work is the competition among them. This particular semester, students and editors alike talked about how crowded the newsroom was with 118 reporters. Many reporters felt like they were competing for their editors' attention. In addition, even if they get their editors' attention, the reporters still must compete to get their stories published. Some stories are held week after week until finally they seem to die of neglect. Those stories may not be important journalistically, but they represent the students' efforts to meet their editors' expectations. Sometimes, editors send marginal stories through the system because they feel an obligation to help their reporters meet the 16-story requirement. To the observant student, that practice can send mixed signals about what is publishable, or quality, work. A related problem with having so many reporters, one student said, is "there just aren't that many stories" (field notes 3/20). Even the editors might concur. When talking about which stories she cares about, for example, Nancy says: "Some of it, you don't care. You know, a six-inch thing on the County Commission, quite frankly, why did we write it? (field notes 4/16)" To students, the standards for quality journalism may seem to shift, hence, the need for continual negotiation.

The Daily Critique Revisited

As the students compete for space and recognition, the daily critique also sometimes transmits unintended messages that complicate the negotiating process. One editor believes the public critique can be more detrimental than helpful. In some cases, the editor said, the good students "go ballistic" if the critique does not mention their work or criticizes a minute problem (field notes 4/16). In other cases, Nancy says, the critique sends students the wrong message. She explains:

> (For) kids, or reporters, who are not that good, for Henry to say something is great initially, but if I know that the reporter didn't deserve that -- I did -- because we have reworked and reworked and reworked and I've sent them back to the field, for him to say, "Great job," gives that reporter a false sense of security. And that reporter – and that's happened to me -- then feels that my job is to make him look good. And so I get copy the next time, just like the first time, full of holes. It's the sense of, OK, "do your job." They don't learn anything that way (field notes 4/16).

But positive recognition can also help make up for other sacrifices and past criticism. When a reporter congratulates another student for getting publicly praised for her front-page design, the designer is all smiles. "It's about time," she says. "... I was finally glad to come in here again (field notes 2/25)." The critique helped confirm her own judgment that her work was good.

Juggling

Unlike professional journalists with full-time reporting jobs, the students have two jobs: to do good work as university students and to do good work in the newsroom.

They find ways to juggle the various demands on their time and to rationalize the times they fall short in either the classroom or the newsroom.

Among their coping mechanisms is to bring homework with them in case they have nothing to do while they are working a general assignments shift. Sometimes they do other classwork surreptitiously. On one occasion, a glance at a computer screen shows paragraphs that are too long to be written in newspaper style. The reporter smiles, says he is writing a paper for his journalism history class. "I'm balancing my time while I wait for phone calls (field notes 2/11)."

Another strategy, one that some students felt was encouraged by their editors, is to skip other classes. One student remembers being angry about the situation:

> Most of the other students, she says, are mainly taking journalism classes and because of an understanding within the school can skip those classes when necessary to work on reporting assignments. "I just can't do that," she said. "I can't skip a chemistry class. I can't skip a French class." Samantha has a double major and a minor. Toward the beginning of the semester, Samantha found it almost impossible to keep up. She failed a chemistry test because she didn't even realize there was a test that day. She had missed it on the syllabus and got a 29 (field notes 4/8).

Other students do not seem fazed by the prospect of skipping classes. They -- like college journalists in all types of newsrooms -- have apparently decided that striving for quality work in the newsroom is worth sacrificing quality work as a student elsewhere. On one day, a designer reports that she had been up until 4 a.m. that morning working on a special section and will skip a class because she had so many news pages to design that evening. She said it was all right to skip class because she would probably fall asleep in class anyway if she went (field notes 2/25). On another occasion, a question about a reporter's schedule prompts a confession that he is missing class as he speaks. "My days are full and you're still supposed to be in the newsroom," he said. "You have to be visible, so your editors know you're here for them." Although he wants to do well in all his courses, the reporter says, "There are sacrifices you make where grades are concerned (field notes 3/20)."

What the students may not realize, though, is that they could be sacrificing some expertise in other subjects that could improve the quality and depth of their reporting later in life. If students are encouraged to believe their newsroom, hands-on course is their most important course, it could be that "too much student time, effort, and interest (is) spent preparing for entry-level jobs at the expense of broader, enduring knowledge and community values (Blanchard and Christ, 1993, p. 45)."

III. The editors

Just as reporters worry about expectations and must make decisions about where and how to limit the quality of their work, city editors face similar questions. How do they know if and when they are doing a good job? To answer this, one must consider what they are producing. In part, their work is the creation of a daily newspaper, but their work also involves the production of another good: teaching. How do they judge their teaching, and do they separate their judgments about the quality of that product from the daily newspaper?

Like editors everywhere, the city editors have space to fill and deadlines to meet. To do this, they must have reporters who produce stories, and they must know what their reporters are doing. But these editors also have an academic responsibility to the students and the university. They must teach, albeit not in a traditional setting. The managing editor explains the ideal and the reality:

> The way it's supposed to work here -- and the way it does work, I think, at least 80 or 90 percent of the time – is that reporters and editors sit down and go over

> the story together. And, during that point, the reporters get, you know, oral feedback, and they also get the kind of feedback that comes from seeing the editor make changes. And, of course, because we intend to be teaching and coaching, we try as much as we can to make sure that when we're making those changes, we explain as we go along. Obviously, some people are better at that than others. Some reporters listen more carefully than others. And some times are better than others. I mean when you're on deadline and you've got three people standing outside the door, you're not going to spend as much time in chit-chat as you would otherwise (field notes 3/25).

Again, reality puts constraints on the level of quality that can be produced at any given time. The question is what level of quality is acceptable and how do editors know?

Judging their work

Depending on the editor, the feedback can come from various reference groups, and sometimes, it is internalized. The more directly an editor works with students, the more likely he or she is to receive direct feedback from them. Editors say they are least likely to hear directly from their superiors. One editor says she judges herself:

> I know I'm doing a good job when, oh, several things, when I see a reporter who started out with a doe in the headlight bit walk in with a smart-ass swag. When I watch these tiny little girls who are scared of me and anybody come in and be assertive, it just tickles me to death. I feel like I'm doing a good job when I say to a reporter, "Here's the story, I need it by 5," and they do it and it's a damn good story (field notes 4/16).

Although the city editor says she also values the end-of-the-semester course evaluations, the newspaper's top editor says he must rely on self-evaluation because he rarely receives feedback from either his boss or students. He said his efforts to improve the quality of his work -- making the public critiques more valuable as a learning tool -- seemed to go unnoticed by many:

> Last summer really, I began making a deliberate attempt to put a little more effort into it myself and to try to make it at least somewhat more detailed and more directive. ... And, some of our colleagues on the faculty have said that they're glad to see that and they think it's interesting. I've had very little feedback from

> the students, so I'm not really sure what if anything they think about that (field notes 3/25).

Although he said it is rare to hear from students, he believes feedback is "highly desirable." So how does he know when he has done good work? "The most important thing is when I think we collectively have done good journalism. That's especially true when it's something that I have had a direct involvement in."

The frustrations

But the editors acknowledge that they can't always do good work. Among the constraints is the nature of their staff: inexperienced journalists who work for four months in many cases and then move on. Henry says there are limits to what the newspaper can do simply because of what it is. "That's a continuing, kind of built-in frustration. And, like a sort of low-level headache, you learn to live with that. At least if you're going to stay in the job as long as I have, you have to reach the point at which you don't worry too much about that (field notes 3/25)." He has accepted that the newspaper's staff cannot always live up to his ideals of how the job should be done. That lessens his frustration but does not eliminate it.

Sometimes, the editors acutely feel the tension inherent in failing to meet their expectations for themselves. An editor wants to catch the holes in a reporter's story. An editor wants the writing to be clear, concise and interesting. An editor wants the lead of a story to immediately attract a reader's attention. But sometimes, the stories – the work jointly produced by the reporters and editors -- fall short. Nancy talks about her work as an editor:

> I feel like I'm damn good at it, and I want other people to think that, too. But the proof is in the copy. I'm a great assigning editor. Shit, I've got so many ideas, it's just almost scary. But I also want to be a good initial editor, too, because you see

> your idea in the morning come to fruition and you kind of go, "Ah, well, wasn't really my vision." ... If we had time, it could be there, but we don't (field notes 4/16).

Why isn't there enough time? In some cases, reporters procrastinate or miss deadlines because they cannot get the information. In other cases, the editors themselves are juggling too much and have too many demands on their time. On one afternoon, for example, an editor is constantly interrupted by phone calls, students with questions and editors with questions. He says those brief interchanges with student reporters "happen all the time. You can't get any one-on-one teaching done at all because you spend all your time putting out fires or answering questions. It's stressful" (field notes 2/25). When time is short, the Kmart editor takes over.

The Kmart editor

The Kmart editor takes shortcuts that are inevitable but "troubling reminders of ideal standards and the distance between reality and these standards (Fine, pp. 29-30)." She makes conscious decisions not to do her best work, but to instead get through, fill her allotted space and meet her deadlines, including, perhaps, a personal deadline for how long she is willing to stay at work. Here is Nancy's description of the Kmart editor:

> ... I find, 3:30 comes and I am the Kmart editor, and I hate that. ... That means that they (reporters) are lined up. It means that there's no way in hell I can ask questions to make it better. Basically, when I ask questions, and it's an area page (inside story) and it's 12 inches and it's 5 o'clock and I know you guys (the copy desk) need it and I see a hole ... I'm scared to death to say, "Do you know, did he tell you how old he was? Did he tell you what he's going to do there?" She mimics a whiny voice: "I forgot to ask." And that just infuriates me, so I just stopped asking it. If I've only got 10 minutes to do it, we go with what we got, and if it's not a story, then I hold it. So the Kmart editor's one who just patches and tries real hard to make it so it's not an embarrassment to me when it gets over there (the copy desk). And a couple times that has happened. Many times, actually (field notes 4/16).

It may have been a triumph of sorts to get the newspaper out and to have local stories in it, but it's not a satisfying experience. "It's not good work, on my part, and it's certainly not a time to teach," Nancy says. "And that is the No. 1 thing that I feel bad about because that's when you should be teaching."

It's important to note that the Kmart editor does not enter the newsroom every day or at all times of day. Before lunch, for example, an editor might give a student an hour of her time because she feels it takes that long to do a good job of editing a long feature story (field notes 2/11). And, in some cases, the editors will make time for the best reporters. Says Nancy:

> ... Of course, the great writers, I go crazy with. Andrew Johnson, I could sit with him for five hours. Sam, the kid in sports, he asked me to edit his 50-inch story that just ran. It was a pleasure. We were fighting over words, you know. But I can't even begin to do that with the vast majority of my reporters (field notes 4/26).

Unfortunately, even if all the reporters were "great writers" and a pleasure to spend time editing, Nancy and the other editors would not physically have enough time for them. To produce one product -- the newspaper -- the editors must make distinctions among students -- a constraint on the editors' work as teachers -- to decide how they want to use their time.

Another time-saver: negotiating which students get attention

To get the newspaper out each night, the editors have to make judgments about the reporters' abilities. Which stories can an editor reasonably expect to have in the paper the next morning? Which reporters are capable of turning a story quickly? Which reporters can write? The editors must be able to make reasonable guesses so they can plan the morning edition. Although it may seem contrary to good teaching to label students, organizational constraints make that necessary.

So, at some point in the semester, some editors give up on some students. They distance themselves from the students' failure in the newsroom by blaming the student, not themselves. They can save themselves time and energy by not worrying about some students. Says Nancy:

> I could name four reporters now that I see once a week, maybe. I've tried talking to them, you know … saying, "you know, you need to come in." … And I feel like, you know, they're lost and, in the first half of the semester, I really tried to bring them in. Second half, I say, "Look, you know, you're almost an adult. You're certainly living on your own, so I can't save you (field notes 4/16)."

She says she tells students that if they come to her and ask for help, she will be happy to sit down with them and work with them. But, she says:

> that isn't what they do. Nancy mimics a whiny voice: "My story's ready; I hate it." "Well, if you hate it, why in the world should I read it?" She mimics a reporter again: "Well, you told me to do it." Well, they've missed the whole point of this whole profession, and so we will sit here quietly while I read through it and get rid of the excessive thats and put in the commas (field notes 4/16).

The editing is cursory, and the quality of the teaching has suffered, too. Again, Nancy is not necessarily proud of the work but seems to accept the shortcomings as inevitable.

The deadlines

It is not just a matter of deciding when and where to give reporters time, however. Time is finite. One editor loses patience with reporters who miss their deadlines for in-depth stories, but she runs their stories anyway. As a result, the stories fall short of their potential and the writers miss a chance to learn something meaningful from the editing process. In addition, the students learn they can miss deadlines – a lesson that does not serve them well as they prepare for the "real world" of journalism. In negotiating what is acceptable -- that is, publishable -- work, some students unfortunately learn to accept much less than their best work of themselves.

Of course, reporters' desire to push deadlines is a phenomenon that can be found in professional and student newsrooms everywhere. One editor of a professional paper noted similar problems there: "The reporters sense weakness and pounce upon it. A story would be coming in at 10:30 at night that was a feature, an enterprise story, that could have been turned in the day before. It wasn't something that was live in any way. And, as a consequence, it didn't get edited carefully and it wasn't as good as it could have been (field notes 3/11)."

Deadlines are a necessary evil, an organizational constraint required to create a new product daily. Nevertheless, deadlines can be handled differently. In the case of the professional newspaper, the reporters and editors made a choice. They changed the deadlines and enforced them. "(We're) just kind of backing everything up that can be backed up and allowing time to be spent in executing the details, and then leaving some availability for the live stuff to be done live when it needs to be," the editor said.

Negotiating the distribution of labor

Just as deadlines can be negotiated, so can who does the work when. "The division of labor is not a given," Fine says (p. 37), "but must be negotiated with more or less strain. Flexibility is, of course, desirable, but when interests diverge or when communication is ineffective, tension results as workers have different ideas of what is expected of them and their colleagues." Different city editors have their own set of reporters. Sometimes editors are reluctant to edit the work of other editors' reporters. If an editor is absent, then a story might be held until the assigning editor returns and can review the story him or herself. Journalistically, the obvious advantage is that the assigning editor knows the most about the story and the reporter. At other times, however, the editors are trying to limit their work hours and to stick to the routines that help them get their individual work done. Nancy recounts a recent experience:

> I truly had eight stories I had to edit. No one here, none of the other editors, had a damn thing to edit on deadline. And I said at the budget meeting, "I'm gonna need some help." Editor one said, "I've got weekly to edit." Editor two said, "I've got business copy to edit." Editor three said, "I've got features." Editor four said, "I gotta go get my kid." ... So that's part of my frustration (field notes 4/16).

Did they all feel they were being good editors that day? Certainly, Nancy would have disagreed, and the workload must be negotiated daily.

Juggling

In addition to negotiating who will do what in the production of the newspaper, the editors also must find a way to juggle their various duties. Just as reporters are also students taking other classes, editors not just editors. They do not focus 100 percent of their energies on the production of a newspaper. Some are students themselves, pursuing doctoral or master's degrees and working on their own classes and research. Priorities change the closer the editor/graduate student comes to graduation. Job interviews must be scheduled. Dissertations must be written. When editors take time from their newsroom duties to attend to other responsibilities, someone must pick up the slack.

Other editors are committed to the long-term future of the newspaper, but they, too, are juggling. Like other faculty members, they have various committee meetings (Riffe et al. 1998, p. 106). In addition, every day, the editors attend two budget meetings in which they discuss which stories are planned for the next day's paper. This particular semester, the editors also had meetings on redesigning the newspaper. On some days, the meetings would begin at 9:30 and continue until 4 p.m. Some of the editors also have to teach other classes, which require preparation and grading. As a result, deadlines are missed. "I know what the damn deadline is," an editor tells her peers. "But let's have a reality check. If you teach at 10 and you teach at 11 and you've got a 1 o'clock and a 2 o'clock," the deadline is not going to be met (field notes 2/11). Another result is that the teaching can suffer. One editor recounts teaching an introductory class: "It had been a long time since I taught it. I forgot how demanding it is done right, and I didn't do it as well as I should have. … I'm not sure that I want to carve out as much time and energy for that course as it really takes to do it right (field notes 3/25)." He was worried about the aesthetics of his work.

Distancing

The editors cope with the frustrations of the job by distancing themselves from the failures. They remind themselves that it is a teaching newsroom, or they assign the responsibility for failure to others, often the students. For some, being an editor in an educational setting required a readjustment. "When I first started doing this, I was caught up in not getting beat by the (competition)," Eric says. "… But now I know you have to remember it's a teaching environment and you have kids who are still learning (field notes 3/20)." Henry stresses the limits of what the newspaper can be. His motto for the paper is "pretty good for what it is," and he notes experiencing "vicarious pleasure and vicarious pain" when the newspaper does either well or poorly.

Sometimes, a whole semester can be judged to be a failure – not because of the editors' teaching but because of the quality of students. One newsroom staffer talked about a typical and not-so-typical semester:

> I know we all start out, all of us, carrying them and pushing them over that incredibly steep learning curve that they have to hit when they first get here. And then hopefully, of course, the ideal is toward the middle (of the semester), most of them pick up speed and they are kind of doing it on their own and they are getting those basic stories out and they're starting to challenge themselves a little bit more or accept those challenges we give them. … (But) there's going to be semesters where they still can't report to save their little souls by the time they get out because they are just the semester of the dumb-dumbs, you know. Last semester felt like that to me (field notes 2/18)."

The bigger picture

There certainly are limits to how "good" *The Daily Collegian* can be. Editors and reporters cannot change the necessity of deadlines, which provide a way to manage time to consistently produce a product. Other factors, such as the student-faculty ratio, are beyond individual control, as well. These are decisions to be made at a higher, institutional level. How does one compare the work of a faculty editor with the work of another professor who might have 200 students enrolled in three classes but does not help produce a tangible, at-your-doorstep-every-morning product? Before the semester was over, Henry successfully lobbied to have the cap on the reporting class reduced from 125 to 100 for the next semester. Will 25 fewer students make a significant difference in individuals' ability to produce "quality" work? Time will tell.

Conclusions

Fine notes that "each occupation has its own audience, but all are evaluated by someone. The question in each work sphere is not whether to limit quality, but how to do so (p. 27)." At the *Daily Collegian*, the occupations are many. This paper has focused only on two: the student/reporter and the teacher/editor. Each evaluates the work of the other in a negotiated process. Each juggles different responsibilities and makes compromises -- limits quality -- in the production of the newspaper. They must continually negotiate what constitutes good work. In deciding how to do good work and in determining what good work is. In defining "good" journalism, the editors have the upper hand because they can decide which stories to reward and which not. But sometimes the editors send mixed signals, and sometimes their efforts to teach fall short.

How an editor teaches certainly varies over time and by individual, and many reporters are satisfied with the instruction they received over the semester. But on numerous occasions, the editors themselves – like Fine's research subjects who said they could do a better job if given enough time and resources – feel the sting of failure. Certainly, the editors do not have enough autonomy to change all that they dislike about their jobs. But some changes can be made. For example, although deadlines are a necessary fact of life, when the deadlines are and how they are enforced can be renegotiated. Why not move up the deadlines for the in-depth stories and feature stories and demand that those deadlines be met? Students would learn two things. First, they would learn they have to make deadlines. Second, they would learn that good writing and reporting take time, as well as a collaborative effort between editor and reporter. When an editor tries to "patch up the holes," the editor's occupational self-esteem is damaged and the reporter is sent the wrong signal about what is quality work. Is quality work, by definition, whatever is published, or is it something more? Could editors focus more on quality and less on a 16-story requirement? Could more wire stories be published when the local stories fall short?

Another part of the culture of the *Daily Collegian* newsroom is the pride editors take in forcing reporters to "walk through the valley of the coals." Certainly, survival skills are crucial. But must journalism students be forced to choose between being seen in the newsroom and going to another class? Part of being a good teacher might be encouraging students in all their studies, not just journalism. In *Committed Journalism*, Edmund Lambeth argues that journalists have an ethical obligation to get a complete education – to know the subject matter they are reporting. Betty Medsger and others also argue that journalism educators need to focus more on teaching journalism. The Kmart editor teaches something about journalism, but perhaps not a message that will do much in the long run to improve the profession.

Just as reporters evaluate the quality of the education they are receiving and editors evaluate the quality of reporters and their stories, so do readers judge the quality of the newspaper. If the use of time and space is renegotiated in the newsroom, that larger audience might benefit as well. Future audiences might be enriched as the quality of journalism education improves.

Limitations of study/suggestions for further research

As with any case study, this research effort provides a tremendous amount of information about a particular institution at a particular time. To those with experience in professional and other newsrooms, many of these findings likely will ring true. Still, there exists the possibility that the dynamics observed in the spring of 1998 may have changed along with the personalities involved. There is no doubt, however, that negotiations continue, as they do in every profession and particularly in a profession that must define news daily. Nevertheless, a return visit to *The Daily Collegian* newsroom could prove instructive.

Another necessary avenue for future research is comparative analysis. How do the negotiations observed in *The Daily Collegian* compare to the negotiations that take place in professional newsrooms and other college newsrooms? Is one newsroom more effective than another when it comes to helping individuals juggle competing demands, clearly rewarding their good work and promoting job satisfaction? Or, are the frustrations felt in *The Daily Collegian* newsroom as individuals fail to live up to theirs and others' expectations felt in every newsroom and, indeed, in every profession? Fine suggests that the frustration is universal as individuals strive to do their best work, but exploring these issues further may help improve both journalism education and professional newsrooms.

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Newspaper

NEWSPAPERS IN THE AGE OF THE INTERNET: ADDING INTERACTIVITY TO OBJECTIVITY

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NEWSPAPERS IN THE AGE OF THE INTERNET: ADDING INTERACTIVITY TO OBJECTIVITY

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ARTICLE ABSTRACT

Four recent books on public journalism make clear this ideological movement has drawn attention to the interactive processes of journalism over its static products. This emphasis on process has led many critics to connect public journalism with activism and, consequently, a loss of objectivity. Scholars of the writing process and social psychology maintain that all human communication is interactive, however, and some theorists argue the more interactive the communication, the more effective it is.

NEWSPAPERS IN THE AGE OF THE INTERNET: ADDING INTERACTIVITY TO OBJECTIVITY

Civic journalists and Internet journalists have a lot in common — both groups place a high value on interaction. Civic journalists, also known as public journalists, interact with readers and other citizens through focus groups, resource panels, town meetings and community conversations, whereas online journalists interact with citizens through e-mail messages, list-serve postings, interactive web pages and hypertext links. Both believe including average citizens in public discussions is good for democracy.[1]

Four scholarly books on civic journalism, also known as public journalism, have been published in the past three years, and they make clear that this ideological movement has drawn attention to the interactive process of journalism more than the static products of journalism.[2] Theodore Glasser even cautions civic journalists about adopting a "strictly procedural role" in *The Idea of Public Journalism*[3] and Don Corrigan catalogs numerous civic journalism processes in *The Public Journalism Movement in America,*[4] such as teamworking, alternative framing, exchanging civic capital, acting as civic catalysts, civic mapping, collaborating, conducting community conversations, connecting with the community, deliberating, engaging the public, participating, conducting focus groups, mobilizing, public living, public listening, telling stories and working through problems. The other books that analyze the process of civic journalism are *Assessing Public Journalism* by Edmund Lambeth et al, and *What are Journalists For?* by Jay Rosen.

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[1] John L. Morris, *Citizen-Based Reporting: A Study of Attitudes toward Interaction in Journalism* (Lewiston, NY: Mellen Press, in production).

[2] Edmund B. Lambeth, Philip E. Meyer and Esther Thorson, eds., *Assessing Public Journalism,* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1998); Don Corrigan, *The Public Journalism Movement in America: Evangelists in the Newsroom* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 1999). Theodore L. Glasser, *The Idea of Public Journalism* (New York: The Guilford Press, 1999); and Jay Rosen, *What Are Journalists For?* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999).

[3] Glasser, 9.

[4] Corrigan, 185-209.

This emphasis on process has led many critics to connect civic journalism with activism and, consequently, a loss of objectivity. Scholars of the writing process and social psychology maintain that all human communication is interactive, however, and some theorists argue, the more interactive the communication, the more effective it is.[5] In other words, communication between human beings assumes symbolic interaction between or among them. Many critics of civic journalism seem to prefer to limit the study of journalism to the products of journalism: examples of good news stories, profitable newspapers, effective layout, dramatic photography and perhaps most of all, good journalists. Products are objects, and they are easy to objectify; processes are fluid and harder to analyze.

The field of English composition, which is the study and practice of effective non-fiction writing, went through a paradigm shift more than a decade ago when many of the nation's college writing scholars concluded they could not teach a student to write like Hemingway simply by having the student read Hemingway.[6] They concluded more than examples of products were needed to teach students how to create good writing from blank paper or computer screens. Most writing teachers now stress two seemingly contradictory ideas simultaneously: product and process, which are noun and verb, object and action, and they imply both objectivity and activism. This requires a tolerance for tentativeness.

Underlying this apparent conflict is the theory of paradox, which holds that two opposites can't exist in the same time and place. John Donne, one of the most articulate English writers, made a career of debunking this myth.[7] According to Donne, paradoxes are a part of life, they require tolerance for tentative truths, and strictly linear logic can't explain them. Civic journalists seem to have at least a greater tolerance for tentativeness and paradox, as they accept their action-oriented roles while preserving an objective point of view in their search for truth. They pursue truth but they never have it. People who deny the existence of paradox in their lives reject the affect of interaction on their minds. They ask, "How can we ever arrive at the truth when we openly encourage so many different voices to be heard? How can we reach a conclusion?" This stance appears to reject the process of communication.

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[5] Julia T. Wood, *Spinning the Symbolic Web: Human Communication as Symbolic Interaction* (Norwood, NJ: Ablex Publishing Corporation, 1992); Bernard N. Meltzer, "Mead's Social Psychology." In *Symbolic Interaction: A Reader in Social Psychology*, ed. Jerome G Manis and Meltzer (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1967), 5-24.

[6] Chester Laine and Lucille Schultz, "Composition Theory and Practice: The Paradigm Shift," *Volta Review* 87, no. 5 (September 1985): 9-20; Kenneth A. Bruffee, *Social Construction, Language, and the Authority of Knowledge: A Bibliographical Essay,* College English 48, no. 8 (December 1986): 773-790.

[7] John L. Morris, *Poetic Premises and Logical Limitations in John Donne's Poetry,* master's thesis, Kansas State University, 1989.

A civic journalist, on the other hand, may be tempted to say, "Conversations need no conclusions. The interactive process is an end in itself," but that would be a rejection of the communication product. We need both sides to mint this coin. We create a product every time we go through a decision-making process, whether it be to elect one candidate over another, change a law or publish today's news. We cannot function without products, just as we cannot create products without processes. Civic journalism has gained widespread attention from scholars and practitioners by focusing on a neglected side of the art of news writing.

Civic, public and online journalism — sometimes collectively referred to as citizen-based journalism — tends to emphasize interactive communication, and the resulting two-way process is popularly referred to as interactivity.[8] Interactivity refers to action-reaction interdependent relationships.[9] It involves reciprocal sending and receiving of messages. Some scholars of this journalism move quickly from communication to democratic theory because both involve interactivity, but this study focuses on communication by asking the question, "How does interactivity affect objectivity?"

Interactivity

Sally McMillan and Edward Downes conducted an extensive literature review and 10 highly-structured interviews with online educators and publishers in order to define interactivity. They concluded all communication is interactive to some extent, but interactivity increases when individuals [10]

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[8] Lambeth, Meyer and Thorson, 23-24, 86-87.

[9] David K. Berlo, "Interaction: The Goal of Interpersonal Communication," in *The Process of Communication* (NY: Holt, Rhinehart and Winston, 1960), 109-111.

> * perceive the goal of the communication is more oriented to exchanging information than attempting to persuade;
> * they perceive they have greater control of the communication;
> * they believe they must take an active role to fully benefit from the communication;
> * all participants act and react to messages;
> * the time of the communication is flexible for participants; and
> * they think the environment fosters a sense of place.

The researchers note that some of these ideas are far from new, but the Internet seems to have been designed with interactivity in mind.[11] They also concede there is a large amount of existing research in feedback and sociology scholarship pertaining to interaction in communication. Despite this, their focus is on computer-mediated communication research. The established concepts of feedback and sociology adds rich insights to the new concept of interactivity.

Interactivity is an alternating process of feedback, a term defined by mathematician Norbert Wiener in his theory of cybernetics as "the feeding back of operating data into a system from the interactions of the system with the environment."[12] The term also was used by communication theorist Wilbur Schramm in *The Process and Effects of Mass Communication*, published in 1954. (See the appendix.) Schramm said the sender and receiver of a message must share common meanings of a signal for them to understand each other. They reach common meanings through two kinds of feedback: a message from the receiver to the sender, and a message from the sender to himself or herself when he or she reads her own message. Both processes involve moving targets.

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[10] Sally J. McMilan, Ph.D., and Edward J. Downes, Ph.D., "Interactivity: A Qualitative Exploration of Definitions and Models, (paper presented at the annual convention of AEJMC, Baltimore, Aug. 5-8): 17.

[11] Ibid, 9.

[12] "Cybernetics," *The New Grolier Multimedia Encyclopedia* (Danbury, CT: Grolier Electronic Publishing, 1993).

Before the rise of the personal computer spurred popular interest in interactivity, the military's need for anti-aircraft artillery spurred the development of the personal computer.[13] The accuracy of such a weapon requires computing distances, speeds, angles and trajectories, all of which can change during the process. A small, portable computer was needed to make such calculations quickly and constantly in the battlefield.

Just as changes in altitude affect gunners' aims, readers' attitudes affect the aims of writers. Constant feedback is necessary for good communication, though it is not necessary for one-way delivery of information. Citizen-based journalism stresses communication over information delivery, and the quality of human communication can be measured according to the ease with which feedback is obtained.[14] Civic and online journalists appear to be more interested in communicating with an audience than in simply delivering information to it.

Scholarly research on human interaction is far from new, but it seems to have been overshadowed in recent decades by the apparent successes of scientific methods, expert opinion and competitive debate in determining truth. From a social psychology perspective, however, each individual's very self identity is the product of symbolic interactions with other people's minds or "selves."[15] The process of symbolic interaction shapes our beliefs, our facts, our knowledge and our truths. There is no such thing as a self-made person, or even idea, according to well-established social psychology. Even general semanticists point out that these words — belief, fact, knowledge and truth — are only abstractions for attributes of our inner selves. The word is not the thing; the map is not the territory.[16]

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[13] James Burke, "Printing Transforms Knowledge," in series, *The Day the Universe Changed: A Personal View by James Burke,* prod. by John Lynch, 52 min., BBC-TV and RKO Pictures, 1986, videocassette.

[14] Berlo, 131.

[15] Meltzer.

[16] S.I. Hayakawa and Alan R. Hayakwa, *Language in Thought and Action,* 5th ed. (San Diego: Harcourt Brace Janovich, 1990).

Human minds cannot communicate directly. All human communication from one mind (or self) to another or a group of minds (selves) happens through the socially understood objects of a physical medium, ranging from gestures and signs to words and symbols, to computers and modems. The theory of symbolic interaction expands the concept of communication from simply exchanging information to creating self identities. Under this paradigm, no one who believes in developing strong self-identities would accept a one-directional-delivery model of mass media.

When two or more minds share symbols through a medium, such as language, a two-way construction of meaning takes place. This symbolic interaction, or alternate sending-and-receiving of symbols, is the root of a developing epistemology called "social construction of meaning," also known as structuralism, semiotics or constructionism. This view of knowledge — or truth — stresses that meaning, "even when it seems natural or inherent, is always the result of social conventions."[17] This epistemological movement, developed by George Herbert Mead, Charles Sanders Peirce, Ferdinand de Saussure and Thomas Kuhn, focuses on the fragile relationship between signs and what is signified.

Mead presented seminal ideas about the ability of humans to create symbols to his students at the University of Chicago in the 1920s. Though he never published a book-length systematic statement of his theory, four posthumous books bearing his name provide detailed ideas about how human communication differs from the direct stimulus-response communication of animals. Bernard Meltzer[18] summarized Mead's theory of symbolic interaction:

> The human individual is born into a society characterized by symbolic interaction. The use of significant symbols by those around him enables him to pass from the conversation of gestures — which involves direct unmeaningful response to the overt acts of others — to the occasional taking of the roles of others. Concurrent with role-taking, the self develops, i.e., the capacity to act toward oneself. Action toward oneself comes to take the form of viewing oneself from the standpoint, or perspective, of the generalized other (the composite representative of others, of society, within the individual), which implies defining one's behavior in terms of the expectations of others.
>
> In the process of such viewing of oneself, the individual must carry on symbolic

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[17] "Semiotics," *The New Grolier Multimedia Encyclopedia* (Danbury, CT: Grolier Electronic Publishing, 1993).

[18] Meltzer, 19.

> interaction with himself, involving the internal conversation between his impulsive aspect (the "I") and the incorporated perspectives of others (The "Me") ....

Mead compared this interactive process to the reactive process of animals to discount simplistic theories of the human mind that suggest a direct stimulus-response relationship to the physical world. In a footnote explaining the idea of thinking by means of symbols,[19] Mead wrote, "Rational conduct always involves a reflexive reference to self, that is, an indication to the individual of the significance which his actions or gestures have for other individuals." This reflection creates past, present and future points of view that permit the human mind to try various responses in the imagination before selecting one. He calls this process of the mind "the individual."[20] Meltzer describes the human mind and the meaning of symbols:[21]

> The mind, or mental activity, is present in behaviour whenever such a symbolic interaction goes on — whether the individual is merely "thinking" (in the everyday sense of the word) or is also interacting with another individual .... The meaning of an object or event is simply an image of the pattern of action which defines the object or event. That is, the completion in one's imagination of an act, or the mental picture of the actions and experiences symbolized by an object, defines the act or the object.

Meltzer emphasizes that symbolic interaction is both the medium for the development of human beings and the process by which human beings associate as human beings. Thus as early as the turn of the century, Mead was teaching students that the human mind was a dynamic process rather than a static product. Meltzer believes that some of Mead's terms are vague, his theory omits important references to the unconscious, and it does not seem highly researchable, but he also believes Charles Cooley fills in some of these gaps. Cooley suggests that men and women are innately social beings who derive pleasure from sharing common meanings. Despite the fact that the development of the mind is essentially introspective in nature, individuals share their thoughts with one another. To do this, they use external symbols with shared meanings:[22]

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[19] George H. Mead, *Mind, Self and Society: From the Standpoint of a Social Behaviorist* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1934), 122.

[20] Ibid., 124.

[21] Ibid., 19.

> As we perceive and remember sensuous images of gesture, voice and facial expression, so, at the same time, we record the movements of thought and feeling in our consciousness, ascribe similar movements to others, and so gain an insight into their minds. We are not for the most part, reflectively aware of this, but we do it and the result is social knowledge. This process is stimulated and organized by language and — indirectly, through language — by the social heritage of the past. Under the leading of words we interpret our observation, both external and introspective, according to patterns that have been found helpful by our predecessors. When we have come to understand ... words recalling motions of the mind as well as of the body, it shows that we have not only kept a record of our inner life, but have worked up the data into definite conceptions which we can pass on to others by aid of the common symbol.

Mead and Cooley attempt to describe process and motion of the mind. This makes a static diagram of symbolic interaction particularly elusive, but helpful attempts by Joel Charon and Julia Wood appear in the appendix.[23]

The focus of Mead's theory is on how minds interact and create one another:

> (Mead) is interested in the communication acts among individuals, conducted by means of significant symbols. He further posits that social communication leads to the capacity of the individual to be a companion to himself, to think of himself — indeed, to think. Mead insists that one cannot converse with oneself without first conversing with others. Thought is itself social in origin and interactive in its nature, with the thinker taking alternatively the roles of actor and audience.[24]

Cooley's concept of this formation of self as "the looking glass self" is interesting and memorable, but it does little to explain the process. One must struggle to remember that Cooley's looking glass is metaphorical, not literal:

> Cooley is widely identified in modern secondary sources as the author of the conception of the "looking glass self" — the idea that the raw empirical material for the formation of self consists of reflections provided by others. That Cooley is so closely identified with this conception is testimony to the power of metaphor as the vehicle for memory. While this identification is certainly correct, it seems a particular

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[22] Charles H. Cooley, "The Roots of Social Knowledge," in Symbolic *Interaction*, ed. Jerome G. Manis and Bernard N. Meltzer (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1967), 75.

[23] Charon, 47; Wood, 26.

[24] Karl E. Scheibe, "Historical Perspectives on the Presented Self," *The Self and Social Life*, ed. Barry R. Schlenker (NY: McGraw-Hill 1985), 47; See also L.S. Vygotsky, "Thought and Language." In *From Sentience to Symbols: Readings on Consciousness*, ed. John Pickering and Martin Skinner (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990), 243-249.

injustice to Cooley's life work to be so summarily captured in a snippet of a phrase.[25]

Many objects can be symbols. Even a communication medium can be a symbol. Marshall McLuhan extolled the importance of the medium as a meaningful symbol in his famous claim: "The medium is the message," or "massage."[26] There is no doubt the medium of a message is part of the message, but the comprehensive symbolic system of language — written or spoken — also is part of the message, and it is rich with socially constructed meanings. The computer as a symbol, therefore, may contribute meaning to computer-mediated messages, but it is never the entire message. Language remains our most powerful medium of symbolic meanings.

The Internet is a medium, like television, newspapers, radio, pamphlets, handbills, telephones, films, register receipts, airplane banners and billboards. Each of these media shares the most common symbolic medium created by the human mind: language, either printed or oral. What distinguishes the Internet from these other media is its ability to provide feedback quickly and easily from receivers to senders. The Internet has introduced mass interaction to mass media.

The Internet

The Internet is the world's first two-way, electronic mass medium. The use of photos, graphics, text, sound and video does not distinguish it from traditional newspapers and television. Its level of interactivity is its most distinguishing characteristic. Indeed, citizen-based journalism may represent newspaper and broadcast journalists' attempts to increase audience interactivity in an intuitive response to the increasing interactivity on the Internet. Civic journalists are using public forums, community conversations, surveys and other interactive information-gathering methods to increase interactivity with their readers, viewers and listeners. The Internet complements these democratic methods of social construction of meaning.

Executive Director of the Pew Center for Civic Journalism Jan Schaffer wrote that civic journalism "builds in some interactivity for readers, viewers or listeners. They can talk, deliberate, meet, question — even ... calculate (alternative tax returns on the Internet). ... It forgoes some traditional journalistic control and gives citizens some space to have a voice."[27] Indeed, Internet discussion groups and interactive web sites may be the most efficient way to achieve citizen-based journalism.[28]

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[25] Scheibe, 44. See also L.S. Vygotsky.

[26] Marshall McLuhan, *The Medium is the Massage* (New York: Random House, 1967).

> New Hampshire Public Radio's "Tax Challenge" web site featured an Online Tax Calculator that allowed people literally to test drive how different tax proposals would affect their individual tax bills. The web site was used by more than 31,000 people. Complemented by on-air reports and 10 citizen forums, the initiative empowered people to engage in intelligent debate ... and gave them the tools they needed to consider a statewide tax to fund education.

Interactivity does not come automatically with two-way technology. Despite the World Wide Web's flashy graphics and photos and even some sound and video, many Web pages are not very interactive. The most interactive feature of the Internet continues to be electronic mail, which also is its oldest feature. Hyperlinks to related news stories, editorials, photos, movies, songs and documents enable readers to selectively add information to a news story, but to increase interactivity and improve communication, writers must receive and interpret messages from their audience. So, the relatively simple process of including hypertext links to e-mail addresses of reporters or other people concerned with a certain news story may be the biggest attraction of a Web page over a paper page.

Three books that guided the civic journalism movement in its early stages also focus on interaction between journalists and members of the public: *Coming to Public Judgment: Making Democracy Work in a Complex World* by Daniel Yankelovich, *Common Knowledge: News and the Construction of Political Meaning,* Russell Neuman, Marion Just and Ann Crigler, and *Public Journalism & Public Life: Why Telling the News is Not*

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[27] Jan Schaffer, "This is Not Your Father's Newsmobile," *Civic Catalyst* (summer 2000): 2.

[28] "Savannah, Philadelphia, New Hampshire Share Batten Award for News, Editorial, Online Initiatives," *Civic Catalyst* (summer 2000): 7.

Enough, Davis Merritt.[29] This general area of communication study has been called "audience analysis," and it tests the hypothesis that the better writers know their audience, the better they can communicate with that audience.[30]

Underlying the audience analysis approach is a communication triangle that connects author, audience and reality through a commonly understood signal. (Please see the appendix.) James Kinneavy's *Theory of Discourse* presents a list of many prominent scholars who have employed the communication triangle in their theories.[31] Some have altered the names of the components and a few have objected "to the artificial separation of speaker, speech and reality as if they were three actors in a play. But this seems to be the danger inherent in any abstraction, and science must abstract."[32]

> More generally, these factors in the process can be viewed as the *components* (signal), the *interpretations* given to the components (reference to reality), and the *use* given the interpreted components by the users (encoder, decoder). Viewed in this general way, the components become similar to what mathematicians or logicians sometimes call a *grammar*, the interpreted components are a *language* and this is used for specific purposes as a *calculus*. Or the triangle thus becomes what some mathematicians call a "theory," and each interpretation becomes a "model."

The technological success of science in explaining and manipulating nature and the commercial success of huge media corporations during the past half-century seem to have overshadowed the social and democratic role that individuals play in public communication to acquire knowledge and seek truth. This technology bias has firmly entrenched the one-way mathematical theory of communication[33] in the minds of many journalists. As citizen-based journalists turn their attention to creating interactive mass communication channels that encourage multi-directional discourse, American culture may return to a more interactive and democratic form of public discourse. Civic journalists seem to embrace such a paradigm, while traditionalists seem to operate under the assumptions of a one-directional information paradigm.[34]

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[29] W. Russell Neuman, Marion R. Just, and Ann N. Crigler, *Common Knowledge: News and the Construction of Political Meaning* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992); Merritt Davis and Daniel Yankelovich.

[30] Dennis McQuail, *Audience Analysis* (Thousand Oaks, CA:SAGE Publications, 1997); Dwight DeWerth-Pallmeyer, *The Audience in the News* (Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 1997).

[31] James L. Kinneavy, *A Theory of Discourse* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1971), 19.

[32] Ibid., 20 (notes omitted).

[33] Werner J. Severin and James W. Tankard, *Communication Theories: Origins, Methods, and Uses In the Mass Media* (New York: Longman, 1992), 39.

Journalism always has been tied to technology, starting with the invention of reusable type, viscous ink and the printing press more than 500 years ago. Mass audiences first began to appear as readers of inexpensive penny newspapers during the late 1800s. The large press runs were made possible by steam-driven, rotary press technology. The advent of radio in the 1920s seemed so pervasive it was considered a dangerous tool of propaganda, and, therefore, it was licensed and regulated by the government. Ultimately, the influence of the mass media was demonstrated by the major television networks broadcasting just three signal to millions of Americans during the 1950s and '60s. Today, however, the mass media are experiencing fragmentation of their audiences as citizens use numerous news sources created by the technology of the computer microchip. Recent research in theories of selective influence[35] indicates that neither information sources nor destinations of messages are homogeneous, and this fact, combined with the availability of numerous new sources of information, seriously undermines any contemporary one-directional model of mass communication.

Yankelovich claims the delivery of information approach to journalism does not help people come to "public judgment," which is public opinion that is "stable, consistent, and responsible."[36] He contrasts public judgment to opinion that changes easily or opinion that contains internal contradictions. His book contains several examples, drawn from his years as a public opinion and mass media researcher. He describes how the "Culture of Technical

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[34] Michael Schudson, *The Power of News* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1995), 40.

[35] Melvin L. DeFleur and Sandra Ball-Rokeach, *Theories of Mass Communication* 5th ed. (White Plains, NY: Longman, 1989) , 168-201.

[36] Yankelovich, 42.

Control" devalues all opinion, and he argues that democracy and capitalism depend on value judgments as much as they do on scientific facts.

Communication involves the symbolic representation and interpretation of values as well as objects. In their competitive zeal to be fair to all sides of public issues while regularly being accused of bias, journalists repeatedly have defended themselves by invoking a stance of objectivity,[37] a term borrowed from the natural sciences that requires the observer to remain neutral, dispassionate and detached from a subject. In their professional competition to be the most objective, however, many journalists apparently have objectified their readers, too, even though they are not observing their readers but trying to communicate with them. Journalists have a tradition of overlooking readers' opinions because they are systematically trained to be concerned only with facts, which they usually associate with professional experts and government agencies.

Objectivity during research minimizes the personal biases of the observer, and this has helped scientists make enormous contributions to technological knowledge; however, even scientists make value judgments about their audiences when they present their research. When they decide to write, they no longer are detached, and they must know their audience well to communicate well. This clearly suggests that objectivity is a good research method, but not a good communication method. There is more than one kind of knowledge, Yankelovich argues, and human communication is influenced by all of them.[38]

Yankelovich devotes two chapters to show that objectivism has been so successful in so many areas of technical culture, there is a tendency for experts to think only in such terms.[39] Because objective detachment works so well for scientific research, for example, reporters often remain in the same mode while writing, even though writing traditionally has been considered an art, not a science. This professional ritual places a barrier between journalists and their audiences, which undermines established theories of audience analysis, symbolic interaction and human communication.

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[37] Gaye Tuchman, "Objectivity as Strategic Ritual: An Examination of Newsmen's Notions of Objectivity," *American Journal of Sociology* 77, no. 4. (1972): 660-679.

[38] Ibid., 220-236.

[39] Ibid., 190-210.

To remain detached from the observed and from the readers, journalists routinely rely on experts, who also tend to objectify the public. Every side of an issue has its own experts, and every side tends to overstate its point of view so that public issues often are presented in the media as polarized battles. This frustrates much of the news audience because many citizens don't identify with either extreme. After partisan journalism faded from colonial America, objective journalism emerged through a widespread desire to attract the most news readers by seeking the middle ideological ground,[40] but, ironically, this type of objectivity led to quoting experts from polarized extremes — not the middle ground.[41]

Yankelovich argues that the media are good at making the public aware of information. They are weak, however, at helping the public work through controversies to form public judgments. He offers the following 10 rules for resolution to public leaders :

1. Learn what the public's starting point is and how to address it.
2. Do not depend on experts to present issues.
3. Address the public's preoccupation before going on to any other facet of the issue.
4. Give the public the incentive of knowing someone is listening ... and cares.
5. Limit the number of issues to two or three at a time.
6. Working through is best accomplished when people have choices.
7. Highlight the underlying values of the choices.
8. Note internal contradictions in logic.
9. Compromise to conserve some elements of two conflicting values.
10. Don't force artificial time constraints on issues.[42]

Even journalists who don't consider themselves public leaders can benefit from understanding the stages of how citizens come to public judgments. If these rules represent how citizens make public decisions — and Yankelovich makes a good argument based on first-hand experience and valid logic — then news writers who understand them will be better communicators.

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[40] Ekaterina Ognianova and James W. Endersby, "Objectivity Revisited: A Spatial Model of Political Ideology and Mass Communication, *Journalism & Mass Communication Monographs*, no. 159 (Columbia, SC: AEJMC, 1996).

[41] Davis "Buzz" Merritt, *Public Journalism & Public Life: Why Telling the News is Not Enough* (Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 1995), 8.

[42] Yankelovich, 160-176.

Successful writers are not indifferent to readers. Writers have been wooing readers since the creation of the first symbol.[43] One way journalists attract readers is by presenting unusual facts in a context of familiar facts to gain attention while also promoting understanding and retention. This is consistent with cognitive learning theories that show people learn by adding information to existing schema.[44] This suggests effective communication requires some knowledge of what readers know, but reporters often do not have any systematic and reliable way to assess how the public interprets their work, and some apparently aren't even interested.[45]

Whereas Yankelovich created theory based on research, Neuman, Just and Crigler conducted research based on theory — the social construction model of political communication, which "triangulates media, audience, and issue domains":

> Theory in this tradition focuses on the conditions of effective mass communication. The communication outcome, be it learning, persuasion, resonance, or interest, depends on the character of the communications source (including complex norms of professional journalism and the nature of the news medium itself), the character of the audience (diversely skilled and interested in public affairs), as well as the nature of the public issues in question. This approach emphasizes that the growth of common knowledge is gradual, iterative, and interpretive. The central problematics of this research paradigm focus on the connections made, and the connections missed, between the citizen's interests and understandings and the language of public discourse in the news media. [46]

This description of the constructionist model of political communication is also an expression of the communication triangle as applied to political communication. The authors' research indicates that reporters and readers rely primarily on five conventional, contextual frames to exchange information: conflict, moral values, economics, powerlessness and human impact. The conflict frame focuses attention on competition between two or more sides of an issue. The moral values frame focuses on cultural norms. The economic frame is concerned primarily with bottom-line costs. The powerlessness frame presents people as victims of powerful social forces, and the human impact frame focuses on concrete examples to illustrate abstract public issues.

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[43] Glasser, xx

[44] Neuman, Just and Crigler, 14-15.

[45] Ibid., 78; Rosen, 42, 122.

[46] Neuman, Just and Crigler, 110.

The authors' comparison of how often each frame is employed by readers as opposed to reporters is interesting because they don't match. Readers, according to the analysis of in-depth interviews, rely most on human impact and moral values while reporters rely more on conflict and powerlessness. Neuman, Just and Crigler have contributed some useful terms for discussion and further research. If reporters agree that even objective journalism involves selecting a contextual frame in order to convey meaning to a particular audience, the concept would be very valuable in teaching, managing, writing and reading news.

Despite these theories and research, media critic Michael Schudson claims the dominant popular and academic paradigm of mass communication remains the one-directional "transmission model,"[47] also known as the mathematical, silver bullet and hypodermic needle theories. He points out that in the 1800s, newspaper readers often wrote articles directed at each other, much like today's electronic bulletin boards and online discussions. Even though newspaper readers can still contribute messages through letters to the editor,

> ... the metropolitan press, as it became a more insistent, self-conscious, and lucrative big business, increased its distance from its readers. As the link between press and party weakened, the newspaper voice no longer presumed even a broad political agreement with its readers. More and more, the voice of the professional newspaper was separated out from the voice of the readers; where once the two were undifferentiated, they became sharply divided.[48]

Newspapers rely heavily on letters to the editor or anonymous phone lines for feedback, but the audience for these messages normally consists of editors and readers — not news writers. Schudson argues that an ideological gulf has developed between reporters and their audiences. This division was a significant finding of readership research in the 1970s,[49] but the main response of the news media was to make reporters more visible through increased use of their bylines and photos. This may have helped readers know reporters, but it didn't help reporters know their readers. Media critic Lance Strate agrees with Schudson:

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[47] Schudson, 40.

[48] Ibid., 50-51.

> Mass media communications are primarily one-way; audience members are rarely able to use the media to send their own messages, and audience feedback is infrequent, indirect, and delayed. Finally, the communicators are physically separated from their audience .... Audience members select and interpret the messages of the mass media and are influenced by them. This capacity to influence has made the mass media the subject of intensive study, criticism, and debate.[50]

Reporters tend to be isolated from readers because they spend most of their time with news sources and other journalists. This hypothesis suggests reporters know much more about experts and journalists than they do about news audiences:

> They cannot see the eyes that glaze over, the attention that wanders, or the look of puzzlement on their "students'" faces. Their feedback comes almost exclusively from other journalists and occasionally from editors or irate readers.[51]

Does this writer-reader gap affect the quality of news writing? Schramm's shared experience model, Mead's theory of symbolic interaction and Kinneavy's theory of discourse, which includes the communication triangle model, indicate it does. The research and theory-building of Yankelovich and Neuman, Just and Crigler supported the idea that the public is not getting what it needs from the mass media to make sound judgments and construct meaningful knowledge concerning public affairs.

Community Conversations

To test the effects of interactive news discussions, reporters at *The Virginian-Pilot* in Norfolk, Va., learned to conduct and report community conversations as an alternative to polling citizens about public issues.[52] For similar reasons, *The Miami Herald* news staff conducted community conversations as a "systematic way to learn about our readers and to help give our reporters and editors some deeper insight into what truly engages people in the communities we cover."[53] The editors of these papers said the concept grew out of the Merritt's public journalism philosophy.

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[49] Ruth Clark, *Changing Needs of Changing Readers: a qualitative study of the new social contract between newspaper editors and readers* (Charlotte, NC: American Society of Newspaper Editors, 1979).

[50] Lance Strate, "Mass Media," *The New Grolier Multimedia Encyclopedia* (Danbury, CT: Grolier Electronic Publishing, Inc., 1993)

[51] Neuman, Just and Crigler, 122.

Merritt had written that journalists have a new purpose: "revitalizing a moribund public process."[54] He claimed public life was not going well and that newspapers had a stake in improving it. Without democratic debate of public problems and potential solutions, he argued, there was no need for newspapers.[55] His book urged journalists to make connections to average citizens, and community conversations emerged from that goal:

> Citizens are equally moved by stories detailing failures in public education, or health care delivery, or criminal justice. But they need help with the next step. The newspaper that practices public journalism should be able to provide that help, not by dictating a solution, but by facilitating broad, purposeful discourse on the issue, by celebrating victories, by diagnostically noting failures, by encouraging citizen involvement, by outlining and assessing available courses of action.[56]

Even *New York Times Magazine* columnist Max Frankel, who had been an opponent of public journalism, said he saw the need for publishers to foster discourse, which is "value adding" to information. He said he came to understand the "added value" of *The Times* by studying new technology. The Internet will enable readers to access information quickly and use it more easily than ever before, he wrote. Anyone with a home computer and telephone line will have access to information from a wide variety of sources: "Shouting the news no longer sells papers; the news is omnipresent. It's what you do with and around information that counts more and more."[57]

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[52] Cole C. Campbell, "Community Discussions Show Value of Listening to Tackle Difficult Issues," *Norfolk Virginian-Pilot*, 4 June 1995, A2.

[53] Doug Clifton, "Creating a Forum to Help Solve Community Problems," *Miami Herald*, 6 March 1994, 4C.

[54] Merritt, 83.

[55] Merritt restated these ideas at a Civic Journalism Teach-In sponsored by the Civic Journalism Interest Group of AEJMC and the University of Missouri School of Journalism, 22-23 March 1995. He resisted defining public journalism and called for additional research to determine what it is he and other civic-minded journalists are accomplishing with their new attitudes toward citizens and reporting techniques.

[56] Clifton, "Creating a Forum to Help Solve Community Problems," 4C.

Frankel said he realized this trend during a presentation by Esther Dyson, "a wise and witty entrepreneur who makes a business out of teaching business to prepare itself for life on the Internet." She predicts publishers and distributors of intellectual property will increasingly plan their businesses as if basic content were free because it is so plentiful. "They will look for profit in the values that they contrive to add to content."

> An ... important added value, Dyson says, will be the community that content purveyors can provide — an audience of people who will pay not just for the content being offered but to be part of the group that the content attracts. ... One powerful reason for reading *The Times,* for example, has always been the likelihood that your Wall Street broker, your business competitor, your next dinner partner and the President of the United States were also getting their information from the same source. They became a *Times* community. And their interests subtly but firmly shaped the agenda and tone of the news served up to them. ... Good newspapers were crudely "interactive" before they ever printed that word.

Frankel used an important concept: a community of readers. In the *Times'* case, it's a collection of financial and policy experts who share many of the same status symbols and philosophical meanings. The *Times'* has a community of readers throughout the world just like some World Wide Web sites on the Internet, but cyberspace citizens prefer to call them virtual communities. Literary critic Stanley Fish calls them interpretive communities.[58] People who share meanings of symbols form communities and perpetuate their communities by creating even more commonly interpreted symbols. According to this theory, a writer who repeatedly assigns meanings to symbols that are not shared by other readers and writers in his or her community will not be publishing long.

Community conversations are more practical than focus groups or resource panels because they are less formal and they can be conducted with little specialized training or expense. The goal of the community conversation is to bring citizens together to discuss public issues that are important to them while the reporters listen. To understand how interactive discussions on the Internet can affect news coverage, it is instructive to study research conducted on community conversations.

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[57] Max Frankel, "Intellectual Popcorn for the Net," *New York Times Magazine*, 21 April 1996, 26.

[58] Stanley Fish, *Is there a Text in this Class?: the authority of interpretive communities* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1980).

A Case Study

The following case study illustrates how some news reporters have begun to increase interaction with news readers through the use of community conversations. The research project documents a systematic attempt to include the news audience in the news process, and it includes a readership experiment showing that a purposive sample of readers distinguished between the language of civic journalism and the language of traditional journalism.

To test the effects of community conversations, a group of radio, TV and newspaper journalists in Columbia, Mo., worked together to conduct a civic journalism project. With the support of their editors and station managers, as well as the guidance of University of Missouri Journalism Professor Edmund Lambeth, the group planned a week-long series of news stories that would include all three media because Lambeth's research had indicated citizens learn more through the synergy of multimedia presentations.[59]

Columbia Missourian Managing Editor George Kennedy said the topic was selected by the media managers during a brainstorming session. They settled on religion because it had high relevance to the community and inadequate coverage. He said the goal was to raise the level of public awareness concerning the relationship between religion and public life.[60]

Research began in fall 1995 when five resource panels were conducted. Each resource panel consisted of about five people who were knowledgeable in some aspect of religion and public life. The panels of experts were moderated by the media managers, and the audience consisted of reporters and editors. These panels were used for background information.

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[59] Esther Thorson and Edmund B. Lambeth, "An Evaluation of the Cognitive, Attitudinal and Synergistic Effects of a Multi-Media Civic Journalism Project" (paper presented at the annual convention of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication, Washington, D.C., 1995).

[60] Columbia Missourian Managing Editor George Kennedy, interview by author, 30 April 1996, University of Missouri, Columbia.

Resource panels are comprised of three to five experts. The purpose of panels is to spur audience-panel interaction. Panels tend to be smaller than focus groups, which usually include five to 10 people without an overt audience, though they often are covertly observed through videotape or one-way mirrors. Focus group members usually are paid to participate whereas panelists often volunteer their expertise.[61]

During the winter, members of the Religion and Public Life project met every Wednesday at noon to coordinate their work in brainstorming sessions. Eight community conversations emerged on the following topics: public policy, evangelicals, youth, the unchurched, women, ministers, Afro-Americans and Interfaith Council.

Unlike the *Virginian-Pilot* and *Herald* meetings, these community conversations were used only for background information. Participants were told in advance that they would not be quoted in the newspaper or recorded for radio or TV, although minutes of the meetings were recorded and reported to project members by e-mail.

Confidentiality enabled participants to speak more openly and freely, said a reporter who conducted the public policy conversation. Otherwise, the citizen-participants might have been reluctant to be honest and forthright about controversial issues, he said. Reporters who conducted the women's issues conversation and the youth conversation agreed. They all said the conversations were good for generating sources and story ideas, with only one reservation.[62]

One reporter said the time and effort required to organize, conduct and analyze community conversations could be costly in day-to-day reporting. The advantage of using them on a collaborative project, he said, was that several reporters could attend and benefit from one community conversation.

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[61] Susan Willey, "Civic Journalism in Practice: Case Studies in the Art of Listening," *Newspaper Research Journal* 1, no. 19 (winter 1998): 16-29.

[62] Interviews by author, 20 April 1996 and 21 April 1996, University of Missouri, Columbia.

After brainstorming and picking topics for the conversations, each reporter met with leaders within the relevant faith communities. They used this time to explain the project and create a list of possible participants. A meeting was scheduled for five to 10 participants and two to four journalists. At the meeting, the reporter in charge explained the project again, including the community conversation, and acted as a facilitator as the participants discussed religion and public life in relation to their community. Some statements recorded from the community conversations follow:

*** Public Policy**

Public motivations often grow out of religious beliefs, but the news media usually focus on the odd and sensational.

Some religious leaders shy away from making public statements because they fear offending the "religious pocketbook."

The news media should tell stories of ordinary religious people in the community.

Many interesting and successful teenagers are religious, but most popular movies portray religious people as undesirable.

"(This) is the most self-consciously secular community I've ever lived in."

*** Youth**

One youth said she weighs everything against how it will affect her relationship with Christ.

A Jewish youth said when she is among Christians, she is afraid to express her religious ideas.

A common base, provided by religion, is important in establishing relationships.

To see young men with "Christ in their hearts" is exciting.

*** Women**

More bridges are needed between faith groups in Columbia.

Muslims are unfairly identified with terrorism.

The media focus on brokenness and despair. The coverage of religion should include more hopefulness.

Several women expressed the desire to look for commonalities among religions instead of differences. "We are one in the spirit," one said.

The news media concentrate on conflict, but this community conversation is progress.

Women do most of the work of faith groups.[63]

This civic journalism project followed the lead of professional editors. *Herald* Executive Editor Doug Clifton used community conversations as a means to "listen as our fellow citizens explore common problems and their solutions."[64] Former *Virginian-Pilot* Editor Cole C. Campbell used them because "journalists are learning from these conversations about how citizens connect to public issues and how we might aid that connection rather than impede it with reporting focused too much on who's winning and who's losing any given dispute."[65] The common thread for Clifton and Campbell was understanding the average citizen's point of view. Community conversations help reporters see community problems and solutions from a citizen's perspective rather than from a journalist's or expert's point of view.

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[63] These and subsequent primary research findings on interactive journalism are based on personal notes and tape recordings made by the author between September 1995 and August 1997 at the University of Missouri, Columbia.

This goal was followed as the Religion and Public Life project members began to brainstorm story ideas. They began by writing themes from each community conversation on a presentation board for all project members to consider. Eight lists of themes emerged from the discourse:

* **Public Policy:** youth activities, community, politics, after-school activities, religion/sports connection, secularism.
* **Evangelicals:** different world view, religion-based life, church community, love of God, absolute values, abortion as moral issue.
* **Youth:** religion is personal, segregation of faith, ability comes from God, culture of faiths, Christian hegemony, youth groups, teachers.
* **Unchurched:** 80 percent of population, great opportunity for ministers, biblical ignorance, Christian differences, morning services for learning, outreach, music and new technology, secular marketing, salvation is prime concern.
* **Women:** women do bulk of work in churches, seek leadership, roles lose credibility when dominated by women, successful ministers have nurturing qualities, press misses stories about devout youth, diverse beliefs/single mind, lack of common understanding of faiths.
* **Ministers:** lack of knowledge, churches are service oriented, government shifts too much work to the churches, coverage of the poor, reporters should experience each faith, media miss stories of hope, stability in transient culture.
* **Afro-Americans:** health-wellness consortium, youth released from prison, poor police relations, religious left needs attention, caring communities, religion can bring people together (but it doesn't), no coordination of efforts, get racist attitudes out of religion.
* **Interfaith Council:** ecumenical, Fun City, Columbia Youth Group, pulpit exchanges, break down fear and increase knowledge, Food Pantry, Wardrobe, St. Francis House, Loaves and Fishes, Bethlehem House, Salvation Army, Lois Bryant House, Ann Carlson Food Pantry, Volunteers in Action.

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[64] Clifton, "Creating a Forum to Help Solve Community Problems," 4C.

[65] Campbell, "Community Discussions Show Value of Listening to Tackle Difficult Issues," A2.

From these lists, the cooperating broadcast managers and newspaper editor identified six themes for the day-by-day, week-long, multimedia coverage of religion and public life: public policy, segregation, outreach, youth/future, women's roles and health. One of these themes would be the focus of each day's coverage, and a "portrait of the religious community" would kick off the series of news stories. Project reporters and editors volunteered to serve on the various theme teams, which met several times over the next month to develop specific story assignments. Meetings also were scheduled with photographers and graphic designers.

The segregation theme team began with the idea of religious segregation, which was mentioned in the youth community conversation report, but one of the reporters said the team members gradually adopted the terms "ecumenical" and "inter-faith relations" to better reflect the approach to their stories. He said he didn't get story ideas from the conversation he conducted with the Jewish community, but he did get a better understanding of this group. They disagreed on many points of faith, he said, but they generally agreed that Judaism was more of a culture than a faith. He was able to use the insights and contacts he made in the conversation in his regular religion beat reporting, too.

The Virginian-Pilot and *The Herald* quoted liberally from their community conversations. The reporters of the Religion and Public Life project chose not to follow that path. After analyzing the community conversations, the reporters were just beginning their interviewing for news stories, though they were bolstered by much off-the-record background material and a wide array of possible sources.

Focusing the dialogue of the community conversations and the deliberation of the project members, who were from three different newsrooms, proved challenging. Reaching well-defined, specific assignments took longer than anticipated, and the project's publication date was delayed a few weeks.[66] The deadline extension also permitted a survey to be completed, however, and this supported the community conversations with quantitative data. Telephone interviewers reading a six-page questionnaire attempted to contact 160 faith group leaders in the area. The survey questions were derived from the community conversations:

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[66] The week-long coverage originally scheduled to begin 14 April 1996 was rescheduled for the week of 26 May 1996.

> * About how many members does your congregation have?
> * About how many members did your congregation have two years ago?
> * What is the average age of the members of your congregation?
> * About what percentage of your congregation is female?
> * About what percentage of your congregation's annual budget goes to charity?
> * How important are the following issues to your congregation?
> * Please name up to three issues that the youth of your faith group think are important.
> * Please rate on a scale from 1 (least needed) to 7 (most needed) the following areas of possible cooperation among faith groups. ...
> * Which of the following service-providers does your faith group support? ...
> * How would you assess the degree of influence on public policy exercised by public officials who apply their faith to their work?
> * Do you strongly agree, agree, disagree or strongly disagree with the following statements:
>
> Faith groups should provide more of the services the government provides now.
> Local news media usually don't do a good job of covering faith groups.
> Women often are not represented in leadership positions in faith groups in proportion to their numbers. Members of different faith groups often meet together.
> Women often do most of the work of faith groups.
> Strong faith helps people maintain good health.

The survey was designed so each reporter could extract results relevant to her or his story, but the main use of the survey results was to compose the portrait overview story. The reporter who volunteered to write this story said the community conversations would help him keep the survey results in context and the survey would be a reality check on the conversations.[67]

At this point, the reporting seemed to be following conventional patterns of writing, revising and editing. The main contribution of the community conversations appeared to be during the story development phase. This certainly would not surprise Merritt, who has maintained that public journalism is additive. It doesn't replace traditional journalism, it complements it.[68] Knowledge gained during the community conversations was used by the reporters during the revising and editing stages to improve their objective news writing.

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[67] Interview by author, 20 April 1996, University of Missouri, Columbia.

[68] Merritt, *Public Journalism & Public Life*, 114.

A Pilot Study

To test whether readers could identify differences between traditional journalism and public journalism, Lambeth and other researchers developed a list of public journalism and traditional news criteria. They were based on literature reviews, journalism workshops and professional experience, and they were modified according to Merritt's suggestions in a memo concerning public journalism research projects:

> The objective isn't to quantify things and make a judgment about whether or how much a newspaper is succeeding, though that might be a small side effect. Rather, the objective is to provide a list of traits that we think constitute public journalism and examples to illustrate those traits — and how they differ from traditional practice — as a step toward a working definition that journalists can understand.[69]

With this in mind, the lists were merged, and a sample of readers was asked to evaluate news stories, photos and graphics from low to high on a seven-point scale after reading several blocks of news coverage. Some blocks contained traditional news, some public journalism and some were mixed. The following items are the 12 criteria that were rated:

1. Citizen viewpoints: Citizens are identified as contributors in solving a public issue.
2. Impact: Many citizens are likely to be significantly affected by this news.
3. Invitations to action: This news coverage presents ways readers can actively respond.
4. Proximity: This takes place close to readers' homes.
5. Reporter-reader interaction: This coverage indicates reporters have communicated with citizens.
6. Timeliness: This news is based on recent events.
7. Values: The values underlying courses of action are explained.
8. Prominence: This news includes well-known personalities or celebrities.
9. Consequences: Consequences of actual or possible decisions are explained.
10. Novelty: This news is based on the odd or unusual.
11. Stakeholders: Who stands to gain and who stands to lose are clearly identified.
12. Conflict: This news emphasizes opposing sides.[70]

The experiment was designed to test two hypotheses:

H1: The combined mean of scores for the public journalism conventions would be higher than the combined mean of scores for the traditional journalism conventions for the public journalism news.

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[69] Merritt, memo, 2 September 1996.

[70] John L. Morris, "Community Conversations: A Case Study of Reporter-Reader Interaction," (research paper, University of Missouri, 1997), 14.

H2: The combined mean of scores for the traditional journalism conventions would be higher than the combined mean of scores for the public journalism conventions for the traditional journalism news.

The sample for this pilot study consisted of 12 university students who were enrolled in a media history course. This was not a sample of typical newspaper readers, but the results of this convenience sample could indicate whether to continue research in this area. Each subject was asked to read five to six blocks of news copy and rate each block, which represented part of a newspaper page and included headlines, teasers, photos, captions and other news devices, according to the 12 news criteria.

At least two readers rated each block, and scores for each of the criteria were averaged for each copy block. Then the scores were grouped into a public journalism index (statements 1, 3, 5, 7, 9 and 11 above) and a traditional journalism index (2, 4, 6, 8, 10 and 12). Each block received PJ Index and TJ Index scores. The readers gave the public journalism blocks a score of 4.62 for public journalism and only 3.62 for traditional journalism; they gave the traditional journalism a 4.16 for traditional journalism and a 3.67 for public journalism.They had correctly identified the different news styles.

The public journalism index score was a full point above the traditional journalism index score for the blocks that contained the public journalism news. A t-test for statistical significance indicated the first hypothesis was supported by the results ($p<.0004$), but the second difference in means was not statistically significant ($p<.1506$), so the second hypothesis was not supported. The results justify more research in this area.

Conclusions

Research on the effects of interactive Internet discussion groups on news coverage is scarce, but a preliminary study of interactive community conversations at the University of Missouri showed that interactive discussions affect news by:

- helping reporters see public issues as readers see them.
- providing feedback for accuracy of information.
- complementing — not sacrificing — an objective writing style.

* offering a deeper understanding of issues.
* inspiring frames that would not have been considered.
* providing a news product distinct from traditional journalism.[71]

These are preliminary results based on one case study and a purposive sample of 12 journalism students, but they justify more research concerning the effects of adding interactivity to objectivity and the value of audience analysis in news writing.

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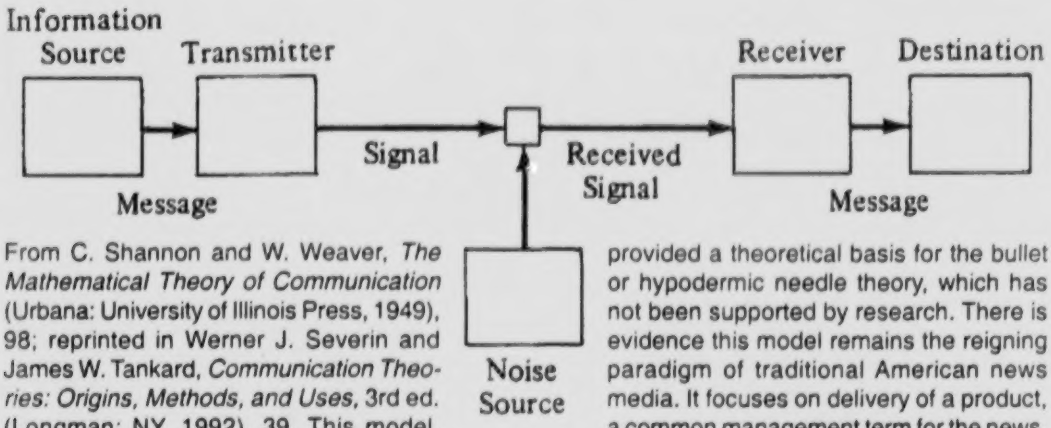
[71] John L. Morris, *Citizen-Based Reporting.*

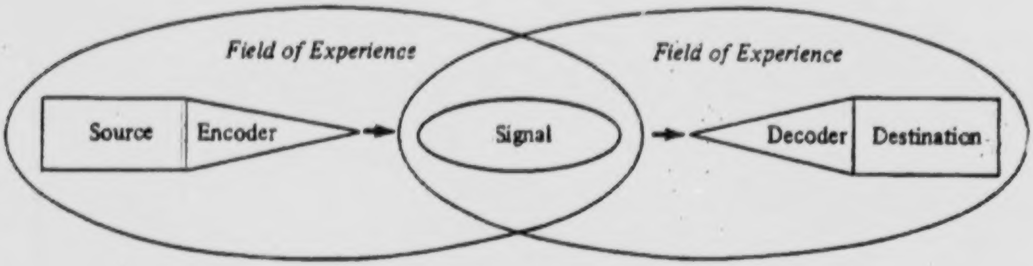
THE SHIFT FROM ONE-WAY TO INTERACTIVE MODELS OF COMMUNICATION

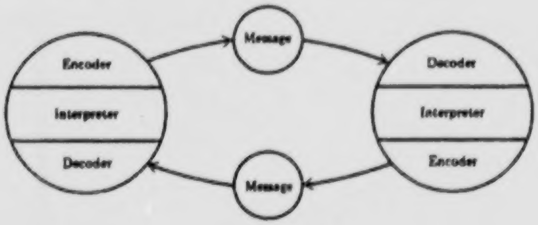
The Delivery Model (1949)

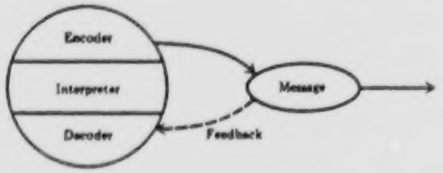

Information Source
Transmitter
Receiver
Destination
Signal
Received Signal
Message
Message
Noise Source

From C. Shannon and W. Weaver, *The Mathematical Theory of Communication* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1949), 98; reprinted in Werner J. Severin and James W. Tankard, *Communication Theories: Origins, Methods, and Uses*, 3rd ed. (Longman: NY, 1992), 39. This model, which treats information as a physical object rather than a psychological process, provided a theoretical basis for the bullet or hypodermic needle theory, which has not been supported by research. There is evidence this model remains the reigning paradigm of traditional American news media. It focuses on delivery of a product, a common management term for the news, and it uses terms that broadcasters commonly use to describe their equipment.

The Shared Signal Model (1954)


Field of Experience
Field of Experience
Source
Encoder
Signal
Decoder
Destination

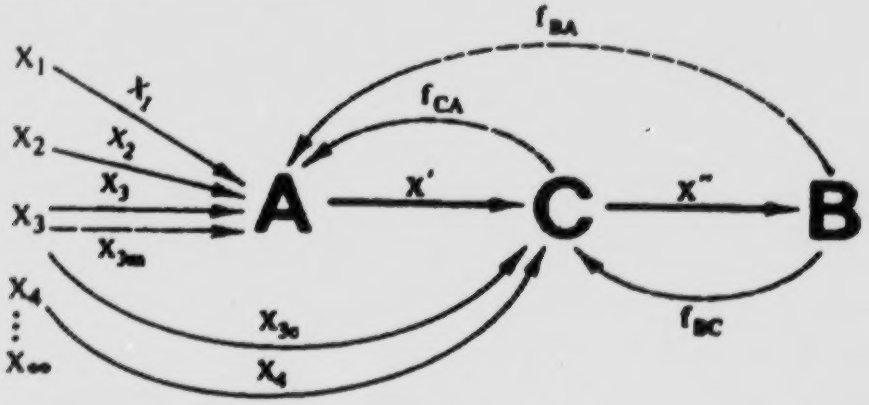

Encoder
Interpreter
Decoder
Message
Decoder
Interpreter
Encoder
Message


Encoder
Interpreter
Decoder
Message
Feedback

Wilbur Schramm, *The Process and Effects of Mass Communication* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1954); reprinted in C. David Mortensen, *Basic Readings in Communication Theory* (New York: Harper & Row, 1973), 31-35. The sender and receiver of a message must share common meanings for the signal to understand each other. They reach common meanings through two kinds of feedback: a message from the receiver to the sender and a message from the text to the sender. These types of feedback also are included the symbolic interaction model presented on Page 4.

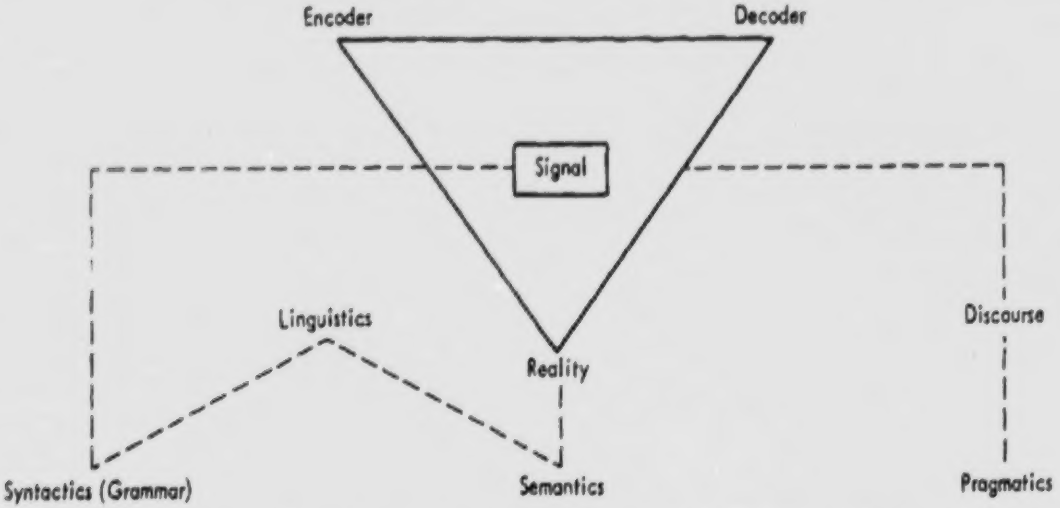
BEST COPY AVAILABLE

The ABCX Feedback Model (1957)


X_1
X_2
X_3
X_4
X_∞
x_1
x_2
x_3
x_{3m}
x_{3c}
x_4
A
x'
C
x''
B
f_{BA}
f_{CA}
f_{BC}

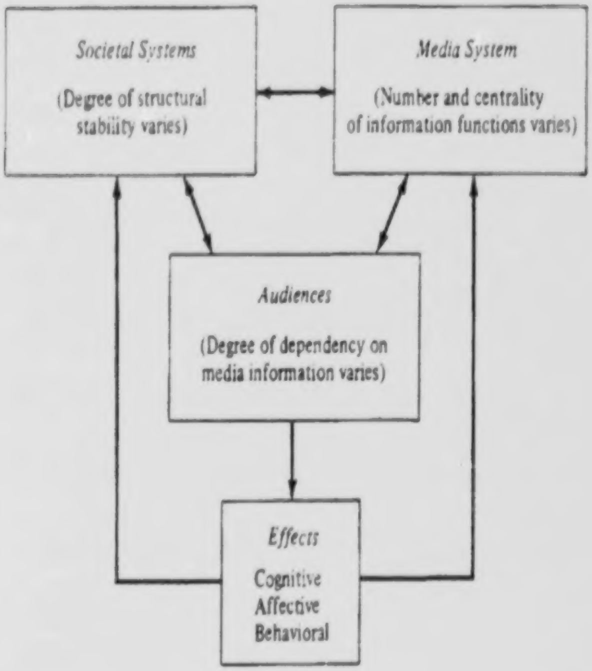
From Bruce H. Wesley and Malcomb S. MacLean, Jr., "A Conceptual Model for Communication Research," *Journalism Quarterly* 34 (1957): 31-38. According to this model, an active communicator, "A," purposely transmits a message to a behavioral receiver, "B," through an editor or a media channel, "C." The message is affected by objects and events "out there," denoted as Xs, and by feedback from Bs, denoted by Fs. The model provokes important scrutiny of the role of Cs in communication, which underlies the gatekeeping hypothesis, but it precludes first-hand knowledge of Xs or second-hand knowledge of Xs from other sources for B.

The Communication Triangle Model (1971)


Encoder
Decoder
Signal
Linguistics
Reality
Discourse
Syntactics (Grammar)
Semantics
Pragmatics

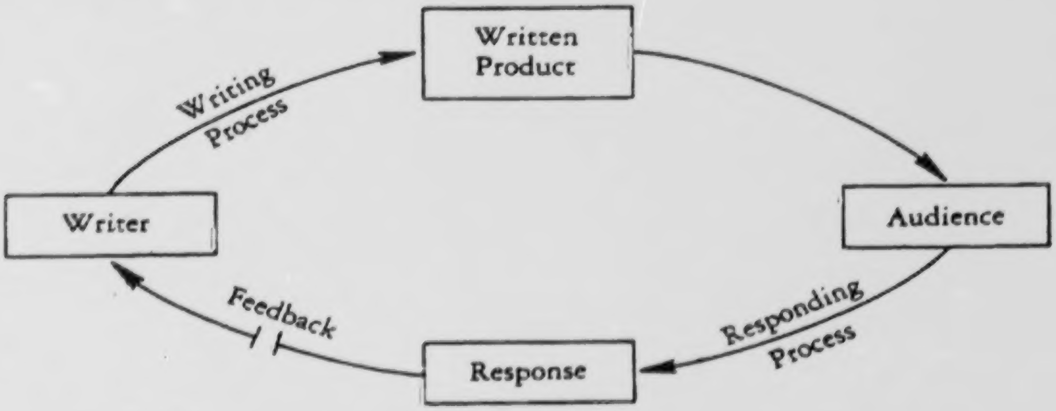
From James Kinneavy, *A Theory of Discourse* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1971), 25: "Basic to all uses of language are a person, who encodes a message, the signal (language) which carries the message, the reality to which the message refers, and the decoder (receiver of the message)." According to this model, linguistics is the study of the signal and its relationship to reality while discourse is the process of communication that connects writers, readers and the world of objects and actions.

The Media Dependency Model (1976)


Societal Systems
(Degree of structural stability varies)
Media System
(Number and centrality of information functions varies)
Audiences
(Degree of dependency on media information varies)
Effects
Cognitive
Affective
Behavioral

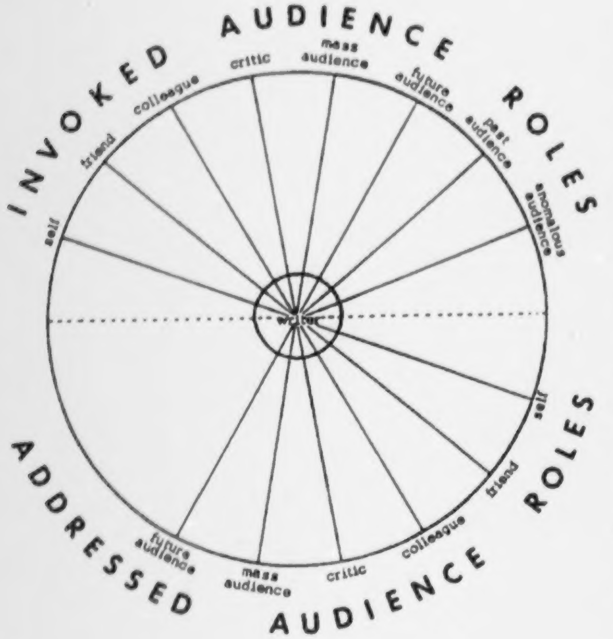
From Werner J. Severin and James W. Tankard, Jr., *Communication Theories: Origins, Methods, and Uses in the Mass Media*, 3d ed. (New York: Longman, 1992), 263, which was reprinted from S.J. Ball-Rokeach and M.L. DeFleur, "A Dependency Model of Mass-Media Effects," *Communication Research* 3 (1976): 8; reprinted in *DeFleur and Ball-Rokeach, Communication Theories*, 263. The dependency or process paradigm owes much to several media effects theories, including conflict, structural-functional and symbolic interaction. It illustrates how research can indicate strong effects in some cases and weak effects in others. In dependency theory, the strength of the effect depends on the outcome of interactions between people involved in the communication process. Dependency theory can be applied at the micro level (reporter-reader-event) or macro level (media system-audiences-societal systems).

The Audience Response Model (1979)


Written Product
Writing Process
Writer
Audience
Feedback
Responding Process
Response

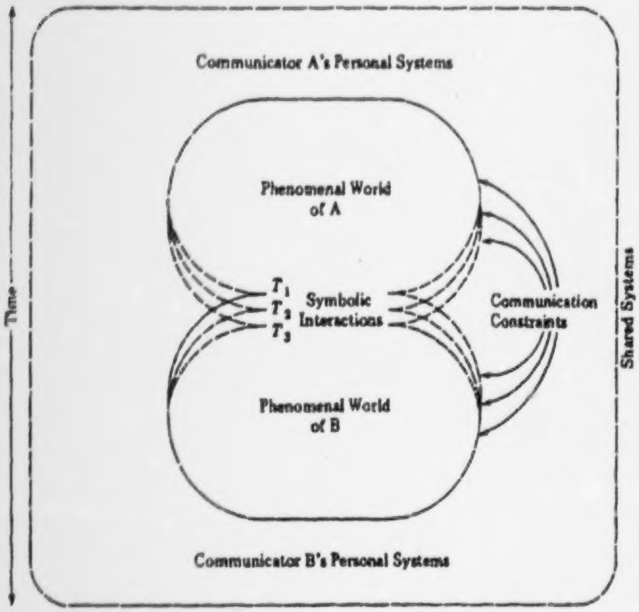
Ruth Mitchell and Mary Taylor, "The Integrating Perspective: An Audience-Reponse Model for Writing," *College English*, 41 (November, 1979), 250; reprinted in Lisa Ede and Andrea Lunsford, "Audience Addressed/Audience Invoked: The Role of Audience in Composition Theory and Pedagogy," Gary Tate, Edward Corbett and Nancy Myers, ed., *The Writing Teacher's Sourcebook*, 3d ed., (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), 246. This is a practical model, but Ede and Ludsford point out that it does not account for the writer's imagined or "invoked" audience during the writing process. This is another reference to the social psychology of symbolic interaction, presented on Page 4.

The Invoked Audience Model (1984)


INVOKED AUDIENCE ROLES
self
friend
colleague
critic
mass audience
future audience
past audience
anomalous audience
writer
ADDRESSED AUDIENCE ROLES
self
friend
colleague
critic
mass audience
future audience

From Lisa Ede and Andrea Lunsford, "Audience Addressed/Audience Invoked: The Role of Audience in Composition Theory and Pedagogy," *College Composition and Communication* 35 (May 1984): 155-71, reprinted in *The Writing Teacher's Sourcebook*, 3d ed., ed. Gary Tate, Edward P.J. Corbett and Nancy Myers (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), 254. This model shows how interaction with audiences does not place the audience on an equal footing with the writer of a text. The writer uses his or her own ideas, including the conception of his or her audience, to create a text. The audience does not literally write any part of the text. This places responsibility for the text squarely on the shoulder of the writer. This model shows how including the concept of audience in the writing process is not necessarily pandering to the audience, as critics of writer-audience interaction have claimed.

The Interaction Model (1992)


Communicator A's Personal Systems
Phenomenal World of A
T_1
T_2
T_3
Symbolic Interactions
Communication Constraints
Phenomenal World of B
Communicator B's Personal Systems
Time
Shared Systems

From Julia T. Wood, *Spinning the Symbolic Web: Human Communication and Symbolic Interaction* (Norwood, N.J: Ablex Publishing Corporation, 1992), 26. Natural constraints prevent minds from interacting directly. Symbolic interactions are sign systems developed to overcome these constraints. By creating external signs and internally gauging reactions from others, the mind constructs symbolic internal knowledge about "personal systems" of others. Language represents the most elaborate and commonly used sign system. Symbolic interaction is compatible with empiricism, the theory that knowledge is created through sensory experience, and constructionism, the theory that knowledge is constructed through interactions between members of communities.

Connecting With the News Culture: Trade-Press Readership Among Copy Editors and Their Supervisors

by

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INTRODUCTION

This study examines the use of a profession's media – trade journals and magazines – among new and established members of that profession. In particular, the research focuses on two subgroups of workers in the newsroom, newspaper copy editors and editors who supervise copy editors.

Newspaper copy editors, called "God's children" by one newspaper executive,[1] perform a critical – and traditionally unsung – role in the newsroom.[2] They are information gatekeepers, guardians of the newspaper's factual accuracy and linguistic precision, the so-called "last line of defense" against libel.[3] Typically they write headlines, those all-important points of entry, and often they design the pages they fill. Copy editors – "the folks in the newsroom trenches who need to know more than anyone else how the whole operation works"[4] – play a particularly important role in the production processes of news. They are seen by some industry observers as critical to the credibility, and therefore profitability, of the newspaper industry.[5]

Copy editors also are known as a group isolated from the more-celebrated newsgathering routines of the newsroom; separated from reporters and line editors by the shift schedules they work and sometimes by interpersonal tensions that result from their roles as the newsroom's police officers.[6] Trade press reports consistently document that copy editors feel undervalued and deprived of training and development opportunities,[7] and much of the literature of media training focuses on reporters, not copy editors.[8] Moreover, theirs is a job that is changing as new technologies,[9] newsroom reorganization,[10] and job reconceptualization brought on by media convergence bring new tasks and responsibilities to the copy editor.[11]

The changing nature of copy editing has brought new attention to copy editors. Poynter Institute, the American Press Institute, and the American Society of Newspaper Editors have signaled the greater importance of copy editing with new training programs and forums for discussing copy-editing issues, and by giving greater visibility to copy editors and their work. The American Copy Editors Society, founded in 1997, continues to grow in membership and in the number of training opportunities offered its members.

Given their critical role and ability to determine what readers see in the news and, in turn, the world that readers see, it is important to investigate what guides copy editors in their work and how they naturalize values, norms, and behaviors that shape their performance and the news. The purpose of this research is twofold:

1. To examine the trade-press reading habits of two groups of newsroom workers: new copy editors, who, it is posited, might be expected to turn to trade press for

professional socialization and skill development, and their supervisors, who might be expected to rely on professional magazines and journals for training aids concomitant to their leadership responsibilities.

2. To encourage a systematic examination of external, professional influences on the culture of newsworkers. Taking their cue from Breed's 1955 study,[12] the few investigators to study how journalists work and what guides them in their work have focused virtually exclusively on internal, workplace factors. More understanding is needed of external influences, including trade press, on newswork.

Why Study the Trade Press?

Despite studies that indicate that journalists receive most of their socialization in the newsroom, there is ample evidence that in-house communication and feedback, not to mention "formal" training, are inadequate,[13] and that therefore journalists' continuing learning must come from other sources, if it comes at all. The Freedom Forum reported that nearly all respondents in a 1992-93 survey said they wanted professional training, but most reported that they receive very little continuing education.[14] In part, this demand has fueled an increase in the number of off-site workshops and conferences for journalists around the country.[15] However, faced with staff and reader demands for more training, and with less – rather than more – human contact being reported in newsrooms across the country,[16] newspaper managers need to draw on a wide variety of training materials for continuing in-house development.

One potential source of continuing training and professionalization is the trade press and publications devoted to discussions of journalism performance. However, the literature on newsroom socialization and the work culture of journalists either makes no reference to the function of trade press and professional journals,[17] or appears to assume an influence without testing or examining what that influence might be.[18] For instance, Gans acknowledged that "Like all professionals, journalists are also under some pressure from members of their own profession, especially media reviewers and critics."[19] That pressure, he said, is exerted through local and nationally circulated professional publications and chain and house newsletters that offer readers mini-case studies that:

> [I]dentify villains and celebrate journalists who have clearly behaved heroically in struggling against often overwhelming pressure. Most case studies deal with local villains and heroes, and are thus of little direct relevance to national journalists; but they reinforce journalistic ideals, which journalists can use to inspire themselves to greater effort or to demonstrate to management that journalistic autonomy must be preserved.[20]

However, Gans gives no examples of that occurring.

A number of magazines and journals for and about journalists are widely known in the newspaper profession; some existing for many years. Besides job postings for which publications like **Editor & Publisher** have long been known,[21] these publications offer analysis and commentary on leading issues in journalism, forecasts of trends, and critiques of press performance. A number of these publications also regularly contain discussions of reporting, writing, editing, and managing that offer reporters and editors insightful tips for improving their job performance.[22]

Some, such as the publications of the organizations Accuracy in Media and FAIR,[23] and, increasingly, individuals and groups working exclusively online,[24] evaluate journalism from a particular political perspective and are likely to be discounted or ignored by journalists.[25] Others are published by professional groups such as the Society of Professional Journalists (**Quill**) and the American Society of Newspaper Editors (until 1995, **The Bulletin**, and since 1995, **The American Editor**), while some are published by universities with journalism programs, notably the University of Maryland's **American Journalism Review,** Columbia University's **Columbia Journalism Review,** and Webster College's **St. Louis Journalism Review.** A smaller number are published privately, such as **Copy Editor.** These publications seldom carry the scholarly research found in **Newspaper Research Journal,** the publication of the Newspaper Division of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication, AEJMC's

Journalism and Mass Communication Quarterly, or the National Communication Association's **Critical Studies in Mass Communication,** although material in these journals may be adapted for publication in the trade publications.[26]

Articles appearing in the trade press are quoted or cited in many journalism texts but one seldom sees in these texts the trade press mentioned as a source of journalists' training and development.[27] Nevertheless, the trade press does have heuristic offerings of value to readers. Speaking of broadcast trade publications, Daniel Brenner wrote that "the trades give the reader a satisfying and accessible entry to the broad array of what is going on at the FCC and in the production centers. … (telling) the tales, large and small, of the age of communications in a manner that befits an industry in a hurry."[28] However, a less-favorable view on broadcasting's trade press was reported by Dane Claussen.[29]

Although there is little scholarly literature on the subject, anecdotal evidence suggests that people who hire for the newsroom want candidates who understand the profession's values as well as specific job skills. One tipsheet for copy editor candidates mentions the need for broad understanding of the profession.[30] Moreover, Becker, Fruit, and Caudill reported that "the teaching of journalism principles" was mentioned by a number of hiring supervisors as something journalism schools were doing correctly.[31] These may be indications that the local newsroom's socialization of the new employee is focused chiefly on local job skills, rather than professional norms and values.

Except for the role of university journalism programs, the organizational research in media has tended to focus on in-newsroom socialization and has excluded or largely overlooked the role and influence of external influences on newswork. But, as colleges and universities strive to tailor programs to provide the skills graduates need in an age of high technology and incipient media convergence, editing educators find themselves hard pressed to emphasize professional values and norms and still teach HTML, QuarkXPress, and PhotoShop, particularly in mixed-sequence classes where news-ed majors, much less students interested in copy editing, may be in the minority.

Trade Press Circulation Trends

Despite their potential value to practitioners, there is evidence that journalists do not attend the trade press. Compared with the 56,200 daily newspaper journalists working in 2000,[32] the paid circulation reported by the leading journals for that year showed a disparity between the number of subscribers and the number of working journalists. Table 1 shows the circulation reported by four leading professional magazines. Not included in the list are the scholarly journals, whose primary audiences are academics, not journalists, or trade press directed to particular work groups (e.g., copy editors, chief news editors).[33]

Table 1: Trade Press Circulation, 2000[34]

Magazine	Circulation
American Journalism Review	26,892
Columbia Journalism Review	22,999
Editor & Publisher	19,851
Quill	12,000

Few scholars have investigated the influence of the trade press on journalism, and those who have generally conclude that readership of the trade press tends to be low among journalists. Weaver and Wilhoit have inquired about trade press reading in their several surveys of American journalists. In their most recent report,[35] they saw a sharp drop in journal and trade publication reading, with 79 percent of newspaper journalists saying in the 1982-83 study that they read **Editor & Publisher** at least sometimes, in contrast with about slightly less than half in the 1992 data reading the magazine at least sometimes.[36] The researchers concluded "a common body of professional literature reached only a minority of journalists. … [and] There is little doubt that a majority ignored important literature that could nurture a critical mass of intelligent thinking on timely questions of journalistic practice."[37] However, the Weaver and Wilhoit studies have not presented readership data by work roles, and thus it is not clear whether trade press reading is different among subgroups in the newsroom (e.g., Is trade press usage greater, less or the same for copy editors vs. reporters? For entry-level personnel vs. experienced journalists?). One study, while reporting distinctly higher rates of trade press readership than Weaver and Wilhoit found, concluded nevertheless that the influence of the trade press, in this case on ethical judgment in the newsroom, was small.[38]

Why Expect Readership?

The organizational communication literature provides an argument for predicting higher trade-press readership among new copy editors and their supervisors. The dearth of scholarly literature on the influence of professional organizations and their media on craft members invites extension of what is known about the dynamics of internal influences in the workplace to the external factors,[39] and many parallels are intuitively inviting. Investigating socialization tactics used by organizations, Jones found support for the contention that "reducing uncertainty is the major goal of newcomers to organizations and that the methods of socialization that organizations use can influence the way newcomers respond to their organizations."[40] Miller and Jablin contend that "new hires (especially those just entering their chosen profession) are likely to experience considerably higher levels of role-related and career uncertainty when entering a new environment than at any other time during their organizational tenure."[41] They add that this "leads newcomers (1) to be conscious of values and behaviors to be learned and (2) to often think about what they do not know and how to obtain the information they desire."[42]

It is not unreasonable to suggest that initiates into a profession might seek guidance not only from the workplace but also from organizations and media outside the immediate workplace. Unable to find information on previous responses to a similar coverage problem, the journalist might seek guidance in the archives of the trade press. Moreover, a journalist eager to progress in the newsroom might prepare for future coverage demands by attending the trade press rather than asking colleagues, much less superiors. As Miller and Jablin point out, newcomers "are very concerned with negative relational consequences/costs associated with observable information-seeking requests."[43] There is reluctance by the new employee to ask too many questions for fear of annoying colleagues or tipping off supervisors that they may have been bad choices for employment. All the more reason for the employee new to the profession or the job to seek information from external sources, such as trade press.

Newsroom Stress

It is not unreasonable to expect that copy editors new to the job would seek a wide range of information to help them master the demands of their work. The organizational literature frequently mentions anxiety as a motivation to seek more information about how to get along in a new organization or new role.[44] Anxiety, or its more common term, stress, run high in newsrooms for neophytes and veterans alike.

Despite the efforts of individual workers and their organizations to harness the spontaneity and unpredictability of news by routinizing news production,[45] one can argue that professional tenure or organizational seniority notwithstanding, journalists spend much of their careers in a boundary-role status. Unlike workers whose inputs and outputs remain constant over time, journalists' working conditions are shaped by raw materials that often are unreliable in terms of quality, quantity, availability, and predictability of arrival, thereby testing the journalists' skills, values, and judgment many times each day. Theirs is an unstable environment at best, and one in which their credibility is under constant threat from a plethora of criticism from the community and from sources, not to mention other newsworkers.[46] Journalists must continually define and redefine their roles in ways most other workers do not.

Thus, newsroom managers might be expected to read trade magazines and journals for discussion and analysis of issues affecting the profession as a whole, and to discover training aids that could improve the performance of reporters and editors in their newsrooms. Attending, at least occasionally, to the trade press of their craft would help new copy editors learn without risking the costs of knowledge acquisition in the newsroom, while it could offer managers a relatively low-cost tool with which to socialize and train their staffs.

Research Question

Men and women in the beginning of their careers or in new jobs might be expected to be particularly zealous in acquiring specific job skills and professional perspectives that will advance their careers. Supervisors might be expected to read the trade press to stay abreast of important issues affecting their craft and also to acquire tips and information that can help them be better managers. Moreover, they might find in the trade press a good, inexpensive source of quality advice for staff development. Both groups might be expected to read the trade press simply out of interest in their profession.

Thus, the research question is: What are the trade press and journal reading habits of new copy editors and their supervisors? The organizational and management literature gives rise to two hypotheses:

H:1 – New members of the copy desk will be regular readers of the trade press and journals.

H:2 – Supervisors of copy desks will be will be regular readers of the trade press and journals.

The question is significant in that it contributes to an important overall understanding of how external, professional forces influence the practice of journalism.

METHOD

Using the *Editor & Publisher International Yearbook* and state press association membership lists, a mailing list was created that included all 350 daily newspapers in six states: Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and West Virginia.[47]

Top editors, as identified by the *Yearbook* or press association membership lists, were each sent two packets containing survey instruments and asked to give one to the newspaper's newest copy editor who has been on the job at least six months but not longer than two years. The survey asked a series of questions designed to identify specific activities being performed on the job, and included questions that asked about trade-press reading habits.

The second packet was to be given to the person who supervises copy editors or is directly involved in hiring and evaluating copy editors at the newspaper. This questionnaire asked, among other questions, about the trade-press reading habits of these supervisors.[48]

Each group was asked, among other questions, whether the respondent regularly, occasionally, or never read each of seven well-known trade publications: **Editor & Publisher, American Journalism Review, Columbia Journalism Review, Copy Editor, The Quill, ASNE Bulletin/The American Editor** and **Newspaper Research Journal.** An open-ended question asked whether the respondent read any other journalism magazines and journals and, if so, which ones.

RESULTS

A total of 111 copy editors responded to the survey, for a response rate of 31.4 percent. A total of 128 supervisors of copy editors responded, for a response rate of 36.5 percent. Copy editors ranged in age from 22 to 65 (mean, 32.3077 years of age; median, 30.0000 years of age; mode, 24 years of age). Males comprised 47.6 percent of the sample and females, 52.4 percent. They represented 111 newspapers whose circulations ranged from slightly more than 1,000 to more than 600,000. Mean circulation for this group was 50,754, the median was 23,000, and the modal class was 10,000. Copy editor supervisors responding to the survey ranged in age from 33 to 73 years of age (mean, 56 years of age; median, 56; modal class, 56. Males accounted for 70.9 percent and females, 29.1 percent. Newspapers represented in this group ranged in circulation from 2,708 to more than 600,000, with the mean size of 49,794, median of 23,000 and mode, 20,000 circulation.[49]

Using readership as a measure of value and importance to the respondent, results for both copy editor and supervisory editors were analyzed and the seven publications were ranked by their means.[50] (See Table 2.)[51]

Table 2: Trade Press Rankings by Readership

	Copy Editors (Mean)			Supervising Editors (Mean)
1	Editor & Publisher (1.000)		1	Editor & Publisher (1.2205)
2	American Journalism Review (.5644)		2	American Journalism Review (1.0407)
3	The Quill (.4141)		3	Columbia Journalism Review (.6417)
4	Copy Editor (.3750)		4	ASNE Bulletin/American Editor (.5862)
5	Columbia Journalism Review (.2887)		5	The Quill (.4655)
6	ASNE Bulletin/American Editor (.2680)		6	Copy Editor (.3534)
7	Newspaper Research Journal (.1263)		7	Newspaper Research Journal (.05)

Note: Spearman's rho for rank correlations was .714.

Responses to the seven trade publications are in Tables 3-10.

Table 3: How Often Do You Read Editor & Publisher Magazine?

	Copy Editors N=103	Supervising Editors N=127
Regularly	19.4%	32.0%
Occasionally	61.2%	58.6%
Never	19.4%	9.4%
Mean Readership Score	1.000	1.2205

X^2=.026, $p<.05$ t=-4.416, $p<.05$

Both groups were more likely to read **Editor & Publisher** than any other journal in the study, with supervisors reading the magazine at higher rates than copy editors. Independent sample T-tests were performed and differences in the readership patterns were found to be significant at the .05 level.

Table 4: How Often Do You Read American Journalism Review?

	Copy Editors N=101	Supervising Editors N=123
Regularly	8.9%	21.8%
Occasionally	38.6%	60.5%
Never	52.5%	17.7%
Mean Readership Score	.5644	1.0407

X^2=.000, p<.05 t=-2.699, p<.05

Both groups ranked **American Journalism Review** second in their ranking of trade publications, but the copy editors were considerably less likely to read the magazine than were supervisors. Differences in the readership patterns were found to be significant at the .05 level.

Table 5: How Often Do You Read Columbia Journalism Review?

	Copy Editors N=97	Supervising Editors N=120
Regularly	4.1%	9.1%
Occasionally	21.6%	47.1%
Never	74.2%	43.8%
Mean Readership Score	.2887	.6417

X^2=.000, p<.05 t=-4.363, p<.05

Columbia Journalism Review, ranked third in reading preference by the supervisors and fifth among the copy editors goes unseen by a large percentage of copy editors in this study. Nearly as many supervisors reported they never read the magazine as see it occasionally, and slightly more supervisors than copy editors are regular readers. Differences in the readership patterns were found to be significant at the .05 level.

Table 6: How Often Do You Read Copy Editor?

	Copy Editors N=96	Supervising Editors N=116
Regularly	8.3%	6.8%
Occasionally	22.9%	23.1%
Never	68.8%	70.1%
Mean Readership Score	.3750	.3534

$X^2=.935, p<.05$ $t=-25, p>.05$

Copy Editor ranked fourth among the copy editors and sixth among supervisors. Nevertheless readership among both groups is low, and differences in the readership patterns were not found to be significant at the .05 level.

Table 7: How Often Do You Read Newspaper Research Journal?

	Copy Editors N=95	Supervising Editors N=116
Regularly	1.0%	0.0%
Occasionally	8.3%	5.1%
Never	90.6%	94.9%
Mean Readership Score	.1263	.05

$X^2=.180, p<.05$ $t=1.648, p>.05$

Ranking a distant seventh among the seven publications for both groups was **Newspaper Research Journal**. Differences in the readership patterns were not found to be significant at the .05 level.

Table 8: How Often Do You Read Quill?

	Copy Editors N=99	Supervising Editors N=116
Regularly	9.0%	6.0%
Occasionally	23.0%	31.6%
Never	67.0%	62.4%
Mean Readership Score	.4141	.4655

$X^2=.396, p<.05$ $t=-.559, p>.05$

As with most of the publications, readership of **Quill** by both groups was low, with considerably more respondents in each group reporting they never read the magazine. Differences in the readership patterns were not found to be significant at the .05 level.

Table 9: How Often Do You Read the ASNE Bulletin/American Editor?

	Copy Editors N=97	Supervising Editors N=116
Regularly	3.1%	11.1%
Occasionally	18.6%	36.8%
Never	78.4%	52.1%
Mean Readership Score	.2680	.5862

X^2=.001, p<.05 t=-3.813, p<.05

A publication for a specialized worker subgroup, editors and managing editors, the magazine not surprisingly is more likely to be seen by supervisors than copy editors. Differences in the readership patterns were found to be significant at the .05 level.

Table 10: Do You Read Another Professional Publication?

	Copy Editors N=103	Supervising Editors N=127
Regularly	5.3%	18.3%
Occasionally	6.4%	3.2%
Never	88.3%	78.6%

X^2=.000, p<.05 t=-2.321, p<.05

By far the greatest percentages of copy editors and supervisors alike reported they do not read other trade publications,[52] although copy editors were less likely to read another publication than their supervisors, a difference that was significant at the .05 level.

To further examine the readership of journalism magazines and journals, an overall score was computed and the scores for individual publications were summed. The mean of the combined overall readership was 3.6219. Results are shown in Table 11.

Table 11: Overall Trade-Press Readership

	Copy Editors N=93	Supervisors N=108
Overall Readership	2.8495	4.2870

X^2=.000, p<.05 t=-4.417, p<.05

Although supervisors are more likely to read the trade press than copy editors, overall, the data show readership of the trade press of journalism is low. Indeed, there was no support for either hypothesis in this study. Moreover, the data suggest that the picture of low trade-press readership holds across several demographic variables. No statistically significant differences were seen in analyses of readership by gender, by circulation size, or by age. The prevailing pattern is one of low readership of journalism's professional press.

DISCUSSION

In **Making News,** Martin Mayer talks about the importance for journalists to be constantly educating themselves.[53] His comments argue for continuing self-education in the newsroom, a process that could be facilitated by reading relevant articles in the trade press. However, survey results showed lower readership of trade press than had been predicted for two important subgroups in the newsroom based on their roles and from analyses of previous studies.

Even for two groups of workers predicted by theory to be likely readers of professional journals and magazines, the data from this study support Weaver and Wilhoit's finding of low readership among journalists as a whole. In examining the nature of a professional culture among journalists, Weaver and Wilhoit analyzed their 1992 and 1982 survey results with those of Johnstone, Slawski, and Bowman[54] and concluded that the professional culture of journalism is relatively weak in comparison with those of accounting, law, and medicine.[55] They suggested that "the dynamics of the newsroom appeared to be the cauldron in which news values and attitudes were shaped most directly,"[56] adding that: "Of the various factors that shaped the professional values of journalists in 1992, the newsroom environment was the most important. ... On balance, the newsroom environment was even more powerful in 1992 than ever."[57] Indeed, many journalists actively resist the professional culture, fearing loss of autonomy that might be imposed by uniform professional standards, such as codes of ethics.[58]

Nevertheless, the question remains: Just what influence does the professional culture and its trade literature have on journalists?

This study did not attempt to determine what journalists do read if they read the trade journals, why journalists do or do not read the trade journals, and the broader question of just what influences, if not trade press, are powerful in building and maintaining the professional culture. However, these questions offer questions for future research as well as possible answers to what might account for low attention among new copy editors and their supervisors to the professional journals and trade press? Consistent with other investigations in organizational communication,[59] research on media organizations suggests that on the job, one learns the ropes of journalism by observation and interaction with other newsworkers, with little or no post-graduation learning obtained from other sources external to the workplace. The literature suggests that socialization often is initiated by the individual through role-model selection, rather than by deliberate, purposeful training by the organization. Anecdotal evidence suggests there is little pressure from news organizations for their employees to be regular readers of trade press articles. Although it was not asked in this study, the question of who pays for subscriptions to the trade press might influence readership. One reason that journalists might not be regular readers of the trade journals is their cost.[60] If that, indeed, is a factor, newsrooms might provide free subscriptions to various worker subgroups (e.g., the copy desk, the city desk). Distributing photocopies of relevant articles would be another way around the individual cost factor.

Available time and energy are related factors that also must be taken into consideration. After a full night of reading news copy, many copy editors report they have no interest in recreational literature, much less the profession's journals. Anecdotally, there is little evidence that top newsroom management has enthusiasm for copy editors reading magazines, even the trade press, on company time.

Also, studies have shown copy editors to be among the most disaffected work groups in the newsroom.[61] Thus, it would not be surprising to see a disaffected worker spending less time with the trade press, and to date no research seems to have asked about this in journalism. It is also possible, though not probable, that the copy editors studied here are seeing the literature in online versions.[62]

CONCLUSION

The low levels of trade press readership among new copy editors and their supervisors raise several important concerns for rank-and-file journalists, newsroom supervisors, and journalism educators.

There is general agreement within the newspaper profession that the quality of the work performed in the newsroom is directly correlated with success at the newsstand. Concern over the credibility and viability of newspapers[63] has led to major initiatives to analyze problem areas and recommend solutions.[64]

It appears that important, valuable, and economical tools for training and developing the new editor are going unused. One consequence, if the newsroom is the site for much training and socialization, is that the journalist and, by extension, the newspaper, will not rise above a certain level of competency available within the organization.

Certainly other external influences exist for the socialization and development of staff. These include journalism organizations, such as the Society of Professional Journalists, various state press associations, and national organizations that may be craft-specific (e.g., the American Society of Copy Editors), role-specific (e.g., the American Society of Newspaper Editors and the Associated Press Managing Editors Association), or ethnicity-specific (e.g., the National Association of Black Journalists, the Asian American Journalists Association, and the National Association of Hispanic Journalists). All such organizations offer a combination of off-site training, online workshops and discussion groups, and newsletters that promote professional values and skill improvement. Furthermore, socialization and professionalization can be influenced by books about journalism, even by works of fiction, such as novels and motion pictures.

Journalism educators might also examine how they use trade press and professional journals in their teaching. Mayer's comment about the importance of self-education speaks to an important pedagogical question: As we teach the tools and skills of journalism, do we also teach students how to continue their educations on their own?

Making A Difference?

Does trade press and journal reading make a difference? There is virtually no literature that deals with this question directly, but some scholars get at it inferentially. Weaver and Wilhoit have contended in their studies that while trade literature reading among journalists is not great – and appears to be declining – the situation may not be much different from the readership of professional journals in law and medicine.[65] However, the rules of performance and sanctions of the established professions provide a kind of socialization and professionalization that do not exist in journalism.

Maier's ethics study did identify a small tendency for trade-press readers to be more ethically sensitive than non-readers.[66]

Moreover, in a study of news-ed students as they were graduating and again after their first year on the job, Becker, Fruit, and Conduit found a softening of ethical values and a greater tolerance for such behaviors as reporters accepting gifts from sources, "evidence of an erosion of an idealistic view of the media even during this first year away from the university."[67] The study likewise found declines in pride in their careers and commitment to remain in the field.[68] One analysis might be that the ethical value system instilled during their university years was weakened upon entering a work environment that did not give continuing training and socialization in professional principles. If so, there seems to be ground for arguing that newspaper supervisors should provide external sources of professional socialization and development to augment, even counteract, the more rough-and-tumble socialization that goes on in the newsroom. The trade journals and magazines represent a copier-ready training subsidy that appears underused.

NOTES

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[1] Seth Prince, *The Secret (Did He Say Weird?) Life of the Copy Editor,* **Chipps Quinn Scholars Online,** September 1999. http://www.chippsquinn.org/news/1999/990903copyeditor.html.

[2] See, for example, Bill Connolly, *It's a Terrible Time to Be a Copy Editor. Or Is It?* Poynter Institute, **http://www.poynter.org/Research/copy/ce14.html;** Gene Foreman, *ACES Takes on Copy Editor 'Disconnect,'* American Society of Newspaper Editors, July 1998, **http://www.asne.org/kiosk/editor/98.july/foreman1.htm.**

[3] Bill Walsh, *The Lot of Journalism's Noble Misfits,* **http://www.theslot.com/copyeditors.html;** Anne Glover, *In Search of the Perfect Copy Editor: 10 Copy Editor Traits that Guarantee You Success,* **http://www.poynter.org/Research/copy/10copy.htm.**

[4] John Russial, "Re: Nontraditional hires," note to NEWSCOACH-L, the training editors listserv, <NEWSCOACH-L@COBAIN.FREEDOMFORUM.ORG>, December 4, 2000.

[5] Gilbert Cranberg, *Help Wanted: A Few Good Proofreaders,* **Editor & Publisher,** October 30, 2000, p. 38; L. Carol Christopher, *Speaking Up: ASNE Study Emphasizes Need for Credibility, Amplifies Copy Editors' Longtime Cry for Help,* **Quill,** Vol. 87, No. 5, July/August 1999, p. 27; Nancy M. Davis, *Honor Thy Copy Editors,* **Presstime,** November, 1997, **http://www.naa.org/presstime/9711/copyeds.html.**

[6] Betsy B. Cook, Steve R. Banks, and Ralph J. Turner. *The Effects of Work Environment on Burnout in the Newsroom,* **Newspaper Research Journal,** Summer & Fall 1993, pp. 123-136.

[7] See, for example, Hank Glamann, *Survey Looks at How Copy Desks Are Doing,* **The American Editor,** Vol. 75, No. 2 (March 2000), p. 22; Gene Foreman, *ACES Takes on Copy Editor 'Disconnect,'* **The American Editor,** Vol. 73, No. 6 (July-August 1998), p. 23; John McIntyre and Pam Robinson, *And Now a Word from the Copy Desk,* **The American Editor,** Vol. 73, No. 5 (June 1998), p. 10.

[8] For example, a recent article on media convergence and the training of journalism students to enter a changing workplace makes no mention of editing skills or copy editors. Cynthia Gorney, *Superhire 2000,* **American Journalism Review,** December 2000, pp: 22-25.

[9] Ann Auman, *Design Desks: Why Are More and More Newspapers Adopting Them?* **Newspaper Research Journal,** Spring 1994, pp. 128-142; John T. Russial, *Pagination and Digital Imaging,* **Newspaper Research Journal.** Fall 1995, pp: 42-56.

[10] John T. Russial, *Topic-team Performance: A Content Study,* **Newspaper Research Journal.** Winter/Spring 1997, pp: 126-144; John T. Russial, *Goodbye Copy Desks, Hello Trouble?* **Newspaper Research Journal.** Spring 1998, pp: 2-17; Leland *Buck* Ryan, *Goodby Copy Desk, Hello Display Desk.* **ASNE Bulletin,** April 1991, pp. 7-12.

[11] See, for example, Allen R. Andrews, *Dumbing Down the Press: The Disappearing Copy Editor,* **The American Reporter,** Vol. 6, No. 1407, August 29,2000. **http://www.american-reporter.com/1407/226.html;** Dorothy A. Bowles and Diane L. Borden, **Creative Editing,** 3rd ed. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth , 2000; Davis, *Honor Thy Copy Editors;* Martin Kaiser, *Cooperation Logical, But Challenging,* **The American Editor.** July 2000, pp. 10-11; Wayne Robins, *King of Convergence,* **Editor & Publisher,** October 16, 2000, pp. i12-i20; Gil Thelen, *Convergence: Tampa's Experience,* **The American Editor.** July 2000, pp. 7-9; Joe Strupp, *Three-Point Play,* **Editor & Publisher,** August 21, 2000, pp. 18-23.

[12] Warren Breed, *Social Control in the Newsroom: A Functional Analysis.* **Social Forces** 33(4): 326-335.

[13] See, for example, Frank Quine, *What People Think of Their Jobs, Newspapers and Bosses,* in **The Changing Face of the Newsroom,** Lee Stinnett, ed., Washington, D.C.: American Society of Newspaper Editors, 1989; David

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Bennett, *Editors as Managers: Their Perceived Need for Specialized Training.* **Newspaper Research Journal,** Summer 1985, pp. 24-36.

[14] Eric Newton and Richard Thien, **No Train, No Gain. Continuing Training for Newspaper Journalists in the 1990s,** Arlington, VA: The Freedom Forum, 1993.

[15] Joe Strupp, *From the Newsroom to the Classroom,* **Editor & Publisher,** Vol. 132, Issue 25, June 19, 1999, p. 34.

[16] Robert H. Giles, *Professors Find They Make Grade in Newsrooms,* **The American Editor,** No. 778, September 1996, p. 2.

[17] See, for instance, Warren Breed, *Social Control in the Newsroom: A Functional Analysis,* **Social Forces,** 33(4): 326-335; Mark Fishman, **Manufacturing the News,** Austin: University of Texas Press, 1980; Gaye Tuchman, **Making News: A Study in the Construction of Reality,** New York: Free Press, 1978.

[18] Herbert J. Gans, **Deciding What's News: A Study of CBS Evening News, NBC Nightly News, Newsweek, and Time.** New York: Vintage Books, 1980.

[19] Gans, p. 266.

[20] Gans, pp. 267-268.

[21] See, for example, Lee B. Becker, Jeffrey W. Fruit, and Susan L. Caudill, **The Training and Hiring of Journalists,** Norwood, NJ: Ablex Publishing, 1987.

[22] See, for example, regular columns on writing and editing skills by Paula LaRoque in **Quill,** Don Fry and Gene Foreman in **The American Editor.** Until BPI Communications purchased the magazine in September 1999 and discontinued several standing features, one of the best-known columns on news writing was Jack Hart's *Writers Workshop* in **Editor & Publisher.**

[23] Accuracy in Media, a conservative media watchdog chaired by Reed Irvine and including actor Charlton Heston on its national advisory board, produces several regular critiques of journalism performance, including the twice-monthly newsletter, **AIM Report;** a daily radio commentary, **Media Monitor;** and a weekly column written by AIM's chairman. FAIR criticizes media from a liberal perspective through such sources as **Extra!**, a bimonthly magazine; **CounterSpin,** a weekly radio program; and **ACTION Alerts** distributed on FAIR's listserv.

[24] Online publications such as **SmarterTimes** at http://www.smartertimes.com, founded, its Web site says, on the proposition "that New York's dominant daily has grown complacent, slow and inaccurate," or **JaxMedia Watch** at http://www.unf.edu/jaxmedia, which asks "News divisions espouse the 'people's right to know,' but then instead of news we get health stories about fat-substitution products and trend stories about a new bra style. This is news?" give periodic critique and comment on the performance of specific publications and the media in general. This is an emerging and, as yet, unstudied phenomenon.

[25] See, for example, Gans, pp. 266-260-276; Marion Tuttle Marzolf, **Civilizing Voices: American Press Criticism, 1880-1950.** White Plains, NY: Longman, 1991.

[26] For instance, Daniel Riffe reports that a series of **Journalism Quarterly** articles on editorial cartoonists and editorial-page editors in 1985-1988 resulted in articles in **Editor & Publisher, The Masthead,** and **Target: The Political Cartoon Quarterly.** (Personal communication, March 2001). Another possibility is that press coverage may result from scholarly research, such as newspaper stories reporting results of a study on editors' news selection (Joseph P. Bernt, Frank E. Fee, Jacqueline Gifford, and Guido H. Stempel III, *How Well Can Editors Predict Reader Interest in News?* **Newspaper Research Journal,** Spring 2000, pp. 2-10). Perhaps counterproductively for encouraging practitioners to read the scholarly research findings, academics occasionally have taken to the trade press to criticize academic research (See, for example, John C. Merrill, *Lessons Learned: Evaluating J-Education,*

Quill, June 2000, pp: 36-37, in which Merrill says of the research generated in journalism and mass communication schools, "80 percent of it is useless.").

[27] One study did look at the readership and the presumed influence of trade press on journalism educators and found professors do use material found in the trade press. Daniel Riffe, Julie K. Hedgepath, and Elizabeth B. Ziensenis, *"The Influence of Journals on Curriculum and Instruction."* **Journalism Educator,** Autumn 1992, pp. 54-60.

[28] Daniel Brenner, *"No, But I Read the Magazine Article."* **Media Studies Journal,** Spring 1992, pp. 93-103: 103.

[29] Dane S. Claussen, *Broadcasting & Cable Magazine: Serving Readers and/or Advertisers?* In Ginger R. Carter, ed., **Proceedings of the Southeast Colloquium,** Milledgeville, GA: George College & State University, 1998.

[30] Glover, *In Search.*

[31] Becker, Fruit, and Conduit, p. 127.

[32] American Society of Newspaper Editors, *Minority Journalists Make Small Gains in Daily Newspapers,* April 12, 2000. http://www.asne.org/kiosk/diversity/2000Survey/2000CensusReport.html.

[33] It must be noted that total circulation is not a particularly accurate measure of journalists' reading habits. Pass-along readership would increase the number of journalists actually seeing a given issue. On the other hand, the professional publications are read by people outside the profession. **Columbia Journalism Review,** for instance, has reported that more than a third of its readers are outside the profession, and that of the 62 percent of its subscribers who are media professionals, only 48 percent work for newspapers <http://www.cjr.org/contact/contact-media_pros.asp>.

[34] *Statement of Ownership,* **American Journalism Review,** November, 2000, p. 61; *Statement of Ownership, Management and Circulation,* **Columbia Journalism Review,** November/December, 2000, p. 75; *Statement of Ownership,* **Editor & Publisher,** October 9, 2000, p. 38; personal communication, Jeff Mohl, editor, **Quill,** December 5, 2000.

[35] David H. Weaver and G. Cleveland Wilhoit, **The American Journalist in the 1990s: U.S. News People at the End of an Era.** Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 1996, p. 131.

[36] Ibid.

[37] Weaver and Wilhoit, p. 32.

[38] Scott R. Maier, *Do Trade Publications Affect Ethical Sensitivity in Newsrooms?* **Newspaper Research Journal,** Winter, 2000, pp. 41-50. Maier's secondary analysis of data collected for a 1996 ethics study (M. David Arrant and Philip Meyer, *Changing Values in the Newsroom: A Survey of Daily Newspaper Staff Members.* **Nieman Reports,** Fall 1997, pp. 55-62) reported, "Nearly 80 percent of the survey respondents said they routinely read at least one trade journal and many report reading virtually every issue of several journalism publications (p. 45)." He added in an endnote, however, "Perhaps journalists overstate their reading habits. Even in anonymous surveys, it is common for respondents to say they've done their civic duty when they haven't (p. 50)."

[39] Some organizational researchers make the distinction between organizational socialization and occupational socialization, "the inculcation of occupational values and skills which may generalize across organizational settings in which an occupation may be practiced." Cynthia D. Fisher, *Organizational Socialization: An Integrative View.* **Research in Personnel and Human Resources Management,** Vol. 4, 1986, pp: 101-145: 102. However, most of the organizational communication research focuses on the former.

[40] Gareth R. Jones, *Socialization Tactics, Self-Efficacy, and Newcomers' Adjustments to Organizations.* **Academy of Management Journal,** 29.2, pp. 262-279, p. 274.

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[41] Vernon D. Miller and Frederic M. Jablin, *Information Seeking During Organizational Entry: Influence, Tactics, and a Model of the Process.* **Academy of Management Review,** 16.1, 92-120: p. 93.

[42] Miller and Jablin, p. 93.

[43] Miller and Jablin, p. 97.

[44] Fisher (p. 124) notes that "Most writers maintain that some anxiety is useful in socialization. Individuals are motivated to reduce the unpleasant state of tension by learning their way around in a new setting."

[45] There is a considerable body of literature on news routines, written from a variety of perspectives. See, for example, Charles R. Bantz, *Organizing and Enactment: Karl Weick and the Production of News,* in S.R. Corman, S.P. Banks, Charles R. Bantz and M.E. Meyer, eds., **Foundations of Organizational Communication: A Reader.** White Plains, NY: Longman, 1990; Mark Fishman, **Manufacturing the News,** Austin: University of Texas Press, 1980; Gans; Gaye Tuchman, **Making News: A Study in the Construction of Reality,** New York: Free Press, 1978.

[46] Gans, p. 266; Marion Tuttle Marzolf, **Civilizing Voices: American Press Criticism, 1880-1950.** White Plains, NY: Longman, 1991.

[47] The findings reported here were derived from research that was part of a curriculum study at Ohio University. Enrollment data suggest that most students at the E.W. Scripps School of Journalism resided in these six states, and anecdotal evidence indicated these were the states in which students were most likely to find their initial jobs.

[48] Because of the research design, the actual names of copy editors and their supervisors were not known, making follow-up mailings problematic. However, post-card reminders were sent, followed by a final letter seeking participation from each newspaper where one or both of the editors failed to respond.

[49] As predicted by Auman and Alderman, some newspapers at the extreme low end of the circulation range reported that they were too small to have a division of labor that included copy editors as a discrete work group. (Ann Auman and Betsy B. Alderman, *How Editors and Educators See Skills Needed for Editing,* **Newspaper Research Journal,** Winter/Spring, 1996, pp. 2-13.) Nevertheless, seventy-five percent of the copy editors and supervisors responding worked at newspapers of less than 45,000 circulation.

[50] Means were computed by assigning numerical values (0=never, 1=occasionally, 2=regularly) to responses in the survey.

[51] These rankings correlate at the top and bottom with the findings reported by Weaver and Wilhoit in ranking **Editor & Publisher** first in all groups and **Newspaper Research Journal** last (Weaver and Wilhoit, 1996, p. 131; Weaver and Wilhoit, **The American Journalist: A Portrait of U.S. News People and Their Work.** Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986, p. 110).

[52] As Table 11 indicates, readership of other publications was negligible for reporters; somewhat higher for supervisors. In both groups, the publications most often read regularly or occasionally were **Brill's Content**, followed by state press association literature.

[53] Martin Mayer, **Making News.** Boston: Harvard Business School Press, 1993, p. 61.

[54] John W.C Johnstone, Edward J. Slawski, and William W. Bowman, **The News People: A Sociological Portrait of American Journalists and Their Work.** Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1976.

[55] Weaver and Wilhoit, 1996. p. 169-170.

[56] Weaver and Wilhoit, 1996, pp. 127-128.

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[57] Weaver and Wilhoit, 1996, p. 171.

[58] See, for example, Marianne Allison, *A Literature Review of Approaches to the Professionalism of Journalists.* **Journal of Mass Media Ethics**, Vol.1(2), Spring 1986, pp. 5-19; Lynn Wickham Hartman, *Standards Governing the News: Their Use, Their Character, and Their Legal Implications,* **72 Iowa L. Rev.** 637, 639-642, (1987); Daniel C. Hallin, *Commercialism and Professionalism in the American News Media,* in **Mass Media and Society,** 2nd ed. James Curran and Michael Gurevitch, eds. London: Arnold, 1996; John C. Merrill, **The Imperative of Freedom: A Philosophy of Journalistic Autonomy.** New York: Hastings House, 1974.

[59] Fisher, p. 132.

[60] For instance, in first-quarter 2001, **Editor & Publisher** cost $4 per copy, or $79 for fifty-one weekly issues. **American Journalism Review** published monthly except for January/February and July/August editions and cost $3.95 per copy or $24 per year. Most expensive was **Copy Editor,** published bimonthly, at $69 per year.

[61] See, for example, Lee Stinnett, ed., **The Changing Face of the Newsroom,** Washington, D.C.: American Society of Newspaper Editors, 1989.

[62] A separate set of questions on the survey instrument asked about the use and value of the Internet and World Wide Web in their jobs. Use and value were reported low by most respondents.

[63] **Examining Our Credibility: Perspectives of the Public and the Press,** Reston, VA: American Society of Newspaper Editors, 1999.

[64] **Examining Our Credibility: Building Reader Trust,** Reston, VA: American Society of Newspaper Editors, 2000.

[65] Weaver and Wilhoit, 1986, p. 112.

[66] Maier, p. 47.

[67] Becker, Fruit, and Conduit, p. 144.

[68] Ibid.

A Comparative Analysis of On-line versus Print Media: Readability and Content Difference of Business News

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A Comparative Analysis of On-line versus Print Media: Readability and Content Differentiation of Business News

Abstract

The purpose of this study was to examine the readability and content differentiation of business news. Specifically, three newspapers and three Internet sites were content analyzed to see differences based on the media type. The findings suggest that the Internet business news showed more difficult readability with longer sentences, lower reading ease scores and more complex business terminology. The other results showed differences in the topics and visual usages between newspapers and Internet sites.

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"K-Tel International is planning to launch a retail Website. Posting on Yahoo's bulletin board said that K-Tel's stock would soar. CNBC news picked up on the news, helping propel the company's stock up 125%. Pfizer's Viagra was being touted on Yahoo's board as a monster drug even before the FDA approved it. Pfizer's stock has climbed 20%." (Galarza, 1998). The Internet is the ideal medium for financial news, because of its real time information. It is not surprising, then, that more and more people rely on the Internet to check market fluctuations for their individual investments.

On the other hand, the decline of daily newspaper circulation in the U.S. that began in the early '70s has caused considerable concern in the newspaper industry and among scholars. Since 1973, when the total newspaper circulation had reached its maximum point, it has plummeted continuously until recent years (Wall Street Journal Almanac, 1999).

The growth of competitors in broadcast, weekly magazines and, most recently, on the Internet inevitably has some impact on the dropping newspaper circulation. And changing lifestyle, with greater emphasis on recreation and other outdoor activities, apparently cause some people to believe they don't have time to read a newspaper (Morton, 1999). In addition, in the visual age, the difficult readability of newspapers may be one of the reasons causing continuously dropping circulations.

If newspapers are difficult to read, readers may turn away from them as a source of information. Fusaro and Conover (1983) noted that if the readability levels of a newspaper demand too much of a reader's skills, reader satisfaction will be reduced. In particular, if newspaper can't provide satisfactory information to readers, the situation will worsen. In the case of business news, the needed and understandable information is the key factor to attract readers. If there's nothing to get and stories are difficult to understand, nobody will want to read business news.

In the capitalistic society, many people try to get economic, business, and financial information through a variety of ways to make financial decisions. Sometimes, those decisions are relatively trivial, but sometimes they have far reaching consequences. The most desirable information sources are the mass media such as newspapers and television or Internet. Even though many people search for personally tailored information through on-line news, mass media are also still profound and a broad information source. The influence of business news cannot be exaggerated in the society. Therefore, the function of business news information providers needs to be examined thoroughly. Nevertheless, business news has rarely been addressed before in the studies of newspaper and on-line news studies. Because the impact of business news is very critical for industry and general readers, it is necessary to have a better understanding of the current content of business news. In particular, since Web content is produced by a different system and consumed differently from printed news, it is expected to pursue a different audience through the differentiated content.

Therefore, there are several questions that need answers. How does the newspaper content vary from the Internet business news sites? Is it understandable or too difficult to read?

The purpose of this study is to examine how the most popular newspapers and Internet business Web sites in the U.S. covered business news, especially, focusing on readability and content differentiation. Three newspapers -- Wall Street Journal, New York Times, USA Today -- and three on-line business news Web sites -- CBSMarketWatch, CNBC, CNNfn -- will be examined.

Literature Reviews

A flurry of research has been done in readability studies, initially in the field of education research. If the reading materials are too difficult for students to read, their usefulness in the classroom maybe questioned (See Severin & Tankard, 1997, for the detailed history).

Flesch (1948) developed a readability formula, which is one of the best-known readability measures. He determined that reading difficulty was predicted by length of words and length of sentences.

Journalism scholars have attempted to apply Flesch's readability notion to journalistic writing styles to analyze the readability of mass media such as newspapers and magazines. Danielson and Bryan (1964), for example, showed that hard news stories were written in a more difficult to understand writing style than other soft news stories. Other researchers who have looked at newspaper readability have found newspapers to be more difficult to read than is popularly assumed; often articles are in the "very difficult" classification on the Flesh scale (Stempel, 1981; Johns and Wheat, 1978).

A number of researches have asked for newspapers to simplify their writing styles to appeal to more readers. Burgoon, Burgoon, and Wilkinson (1981) argued that newspapers should lower their readability levels if they want to increase their effectiveness. Other researchers warned that large segments of the population may become turned away if newspapers continue to be written above the reading level of general readers (Fowler, 1978; Smith, 1983).

Gunning (1952) developed reading ranges that were based only on sentence length. He argued that the longer sentence, the more difficult it is to comprehend, since longer sentences mean more relationships between words and require the reader to expend more mental energy, which reduces reader satisfaction. Stapler (1985) found that sentence length in lead paragraphs exceeded lengths in the three paragraphs that followed, and leads for most papers were "difficult" to read.

Hoskins (1973) found that half of the AP stories and 83% of the UPI stories were in the "difficult" or "very difficult" levels according to the Flesch reading ease score scale. Monznette and Rarick (1968) found that editorials in ten West Coast dailies were more readable than news stories. However, overall difficulty exceeded "standard" levels. Stempel (1981) compared the readability of six kinds of content and concluded that international news was clearly most difficult and sports and women's articles were easier than others. Johns and Wheat (1978) investigated the readability of newspapers to determine the difference in the readability of political and sports stories and to determine the difference between wire and non-wire stories. They found that non-wire sports stories were more readable than other formats. This result is consistent with the previous research (Anderson, 1966; Danielson and Bryan, 1964; Razik, 1969; Reiley, 1974). Later, Catalano (1990) proved similar results with a wire-service news analysis.

Several studies on readability were conducted over time. Fowler and Smith (1979), for example, indicated that the newspapers were generally less readable than magazines through the comparison of the sampled three year period. While the readability of the magazines has remained fairly constant during the 1904, 1933, and 1965 time periods, the readability of newspapers has changed. The findings of the study showed that newspapers are generally as readable today as they were in 1904 although the complexity of the language they use has increased.

Visuals are often discounted or ignored in word-oriented journalism. However, they perform important roles in communication by conveying realism, credibility, and attitudes. Readers also appear to react positively to visual elements, such as photographs and graphics. A study pointed out that photographs are popular with readers and call attention to news stories, highlighting the importance of visuals (Baxter, Quarles, and Kosak, 1978). Polansky (1989) found that the dominant photograph is the typical pattern for a reader processing information on the page. Bain (1980) concluded that large pictures attract readers to an accompanying story better than small pictures and also hold the readers' attention deeper into the story. An experiment by Wanta (1986) found that the size of photos in newspapers could have an immediate influence on readers. The study found that editors have the power to raise their reader's salience on certain issues over a short period of time merely by increasing the size of photographs. He also supported the importance of visuals in interpreting media content in another study. Large graphics provide readers with important information in a concise manner and thus make processing information easier (Wanta and Gao, 1995). Waldman and Devitt (1998) presented the results of a content analysis of photographs appearing in five major newspapers during the 1996 presidential campaign. They argued for the presence of a strategic bias benefiting the front-runner.

Hynds (1980) found that most newspapers are seeking to make their pages more attractive and understandable through the use of pictures and art work. They used pictures, drawings, cartoons, and diverse colors. With advanced computer technology, retrieving graphics from database and updating them as required in an Internet newspaper can be completed in minutes. Thus, the trend of increasing newspaper use of graphics can continue in the Internet environment (Li, 1998).

Historically, little research has examined the content of business news. Newspaper coverage of business was called dry, listless, and out of touch with the interests of the average readers. Carswell (1938), a financial writer on the New York World-Telegram, resulted the prevailing over-emphasis on Wall Street and argued that the editorial point-of-view must be reoriented to the average businessperson; editing must be done for the reader and not the investor. His argument that the public at large is economically illiterate where the mechanics of money is concerned is consistent with the readability studies of scholars.

In a 1980 study, Hynds found cause for optimism in a national survey of 186 newspapers. He concluded that newspapers are becoming more aware of the need for business coverage and are devoting more of their news hole to it.

Barkin (1982) examined the changes in the business section from 1931 to 1979. He found that three major dailies covered the stock market less and international business more. He also emphasized the importance of readable business news and noted the improvement of the diversity of subjects. Through the analysis of trends in newspaper coverage of business and economics between 1968 and 1978, Feldman and Aronoff (1980) found that newspapers moved away from straight news coverage, such as lengthy earnings reports, to articles oriented towards the how and why of business operations and the implications of domestic and international economic policies and problems.

The Internet offers new reporting and research opportunities. While the Internet is mainly used as an efficient tool for reporting (Garrison, 1995) and as a research tool for content analysis through databases, such as Lexis-Nexis, it also gives researchers a chance to compare the web page with the print version of the papers.

Aronson, Sylvie, and Todd (1996) found that Wall Street Journal articles are longer than real-time articles on the Dow Jones Business Wire, but readability levels are nearly the same. A content analysis of three U.S. Internet newspapers by Li (1998) has found that text information is still dominant as newspaper content on the Web. The Web version of three newspapers did not take full advantage of available technology.

Other research has been focused on the characteristics of readers of online news. Mueller and Kamerer (1995) explored reader preference for online newspapers versus traditional newspaper. They found that readers of online news preferred to breaking news, world news, entertainment news, business news, and sports news and online news preference correlated most positively with computer liking. Later, Weir (1999) argued that the use of the electronic newspaper is not correlated with the use of the Internet or knowledge of computers. According to his founding, electronic editions are enthusiastically read by a much younger audience that has been a problem for the print newspaper. Chyi and Lasorsa (1999) found that most people still read the local newspaper in the printed format, while national newspaper sites were gaining more ground online.

Looking at the effect of online media on readers is another interesting perspective. Tewksbury and Althaus (2000) compared the differential effects of exposure to print and online versions of the New York Times. They found that online version readers have read fewer national, international, and political news and were less likely to recognize and recall events that occurred during the exposure period.

Even though many researchers have shown interest in online news analysis, most of studies are comparison of print and online version of the same paper. Despite the fast growth of Internet only news sites, however, few studies have been published in the analysis of Internet only news content.

This study will address two important questions to evaluate business news of print newspaper and Internet business news. First, how does the business news of newspapers differ from Internet only business news in readability? Second, how does the business news of newspapers differ from Internet only business news in content?

Methods

To analyze the readability and content of business news, six media were examined. The top three newspapers (Wall Street Journal, USA Today, and New York Times) were selected based on circulation. The most recent survey reported that Wall Street Journal has 1,774,880, USA Today has 1,629,665, and NYT has 1,074,741 in circulation (Gale Research Co., 1999). The three business news Web sites were selected based on number of sites visits (Gunther, 2000). Even though MSNBC was ranked first, it relies heavily on wired news services. Thus, it was excepted for this study. CNBC, CNNfn, and CBSMarektWatch were selected, because they belong to the most visited top ten sites and provide their own news content.

The front page of Wall Street Journal and the business section front pages of USA Today and New York Times were content analyzed on a number of variables, including readability and content difference variables. Even though the front-page function is not distinct in Web sites, the top stories at the homepages of three Web business news sites were examined.

The variables were: Average sentence length; Flesch reading ease score; Flesch-Kincaid grade-level readability; number of complex business terminology used; the visual type; attribute of content.

Average sentence length is the average number of words per sentence. As Gunning (1952) said longer sentences that have many words require the reader to expend more effort, which causes reader dissatisfaction. He urged writers to keep their average sentence length under 20 words. Flesch (1951) also stressed short sentences and recommended that news writers use an average sentence length of 19 words.

The Flesch reading ease score is calculated by average sentence length and number of syllables per 100 words. Even though Smith and Smith (1984) reported the inconsistent readability of newspapers according to the several readability measurement scales, Flesch Formula (Flesch, 1974) was used because it is the test most commonly used by journalism researchers. The output for the Flesch Reading Ease formula is a number from 0 to 100. While low Flesch scores indicate the material is difficult to read, high grade levels mean the content is easy to read. Followings are description of writing style for each reading ease score. 0-30, "very difficult"; 30-50, "difficult"; 50-60 "fairly difficult"; 60-70, "standard"; 70-80, Fairly ease"; 80-90, "easy"; 90-100, "very easy."

Like the other Flesch formulas, the Flesch-Kincaid Index uses the number of syllables per word and words per sentence to calculate a grade level required for reading. Its highest grade level is 12th. This index is calculated automatically on the grammar checker readability tests in MS word processing program.

How many readers know what an assumed debenture is? Difficult terms often frustrate readers and take more time to be understood. Dale-Chall readability formula has a list of 3,000 words. If a word is not included in the list, it is counted as an unfamiliar word (1995). For clarification of difficult terms, this study borrowed the concept of Dale-Chall formula. However, instead of using the same 3,000 common words, difficult terms were selected based on the glossary of Warfield's book (1994), "How to read and understand the financial news." Among Warfield's glossary, already generalized terms, such as interest or investment, were not presented. Instead, several terms used recently, such as B2B or B2C were added. Therefore, all terms related to economics, business, and finance in six media were presented to a small group (5 students majoring Journalism). If the students didn't understand the word clearly at first reading, it was classified as the complex terminology.

Visuals were coded separately. The visual aspects were analyzed based on the type. The size was not considered in this study, because the Web sites had different sizes varying on the monitor size. Visual types were composed of three items; photos, computer graphics, and data format. A photo is defined as a factual representation of human, animal, or other objects made by photographs. A computer graphic is defined as a pictorial output produced through a computer technique. Most of them are changed, exaggerated, or combined images that cannot be taken by photos usually. Data format includes table, chart, and graph that is complementary for the explanation of articles. Since WSJ doesn't provide actual photos of persons and uses illustration instead of photos, the illustrations of persons were coded as photos.

Stories were classified in terms of their specific content area, which in turn belonged to one of nine categories:

1) National Economy, which included the current economic status, outlook for the economy, inflation, national news about wages and prices, taxes, federal loans, GNP, GDP, jobs, employment, layoff, and other general economic explanations.

2) International Business and Trade, which included international investment and trade, business relations, foreign business news.

3) Legal and Regulatory issues, which included monetary policy, regulation, antitrust, and court lawsuits.

4) Individual Firm, which included change in corporate status, such as, mergers and acquisition, expansion, bankruptcy, profit, losses, sales, and new product.

5) Industry profiles, which included broad industry news, such as telecommunication, broadcasting, transportation, food industry. It's different from individual firm news, which dealt with only specific company news.

6) Executive Profiles, which included firms' executives or other personal stories.

7) Stock Market, which included stock exchange trading and news about Dow Jones industrial Average, Nasdaq Composite, S&P 500 indexes, earnings, dividends, and

bonds. In case of a foreign stock market, it was categorized as International Business and Trade.

8) Consumers Guides, which included government programs for the consumer, offers, services, consumer group activities, union activities, and personal financial investment advice.

9) Others, which included several miscellaneous items, such as education, real estate.

The unit of analysis is the article. Since USA Today and Wall Street Journal publish editions five days a week, Saturday and Sunday editions of New York Times were excluded to have equal sample sizes for all newspapers. Every newspaper has four articles exactly on front page each day; therefore the same number of articles was also selected from each Internet business news site everyday. Even though it is hard to choose the top news stories from a Web site, there are top stories that are indicated by bold type and approximately four or five articles were presented as top stories at each site. The readability ease scores were computed for 180 articles (four articles for fifteen days) in three newspapers and for 180 articles (four articles for fifteen days) in three Internet business news sites for three weeks from February 12, 2001.

Since the first a few sentences catch the readers' attention for each article, approximately the first hundred words were taken, stopping at the end of the sentence that contained the 100th word.

Means were computed for the three newspapers and the three Web sites. Readability variables among six companies were compared by one-way analysis of variance. Differences between each media (print vs. Internet) were analyzed by t-test. To identify the content differences, Chi-Squares were tested.

To determine coder reliability, two persons coded randomly selected 10% of the content. For purely quantitative and computerized calculations, categories such as number of words, characters, sentences, and paragraphs were not examined in the intercoder reliability test. Using Holsti's formula (1969), the average agreement for the coding categories was 94.5 %.

Results

Average Sentence Length

Overall Internet business news articles had longer sentences than newspaper articles did. The three Internet news sites showed very similar sentence length. The mean sentence length of CBS MarketWatch was 23.0 (SD = 5.2), CNBC was 24.7 (SD = 5.1), and CNNfn was 24.9 (SD = 7.4). Although two newspapers showed shorter articles length (Wall Street Journal, M = 19.9, SD = 6.2; USA Today, M = 19.7, SD = 4.8) than Internet news articles, the New York Times revealed the longest average sentence (M = 27.7, SD = 7.7). This difference was statistically significant (See Table 1; F (5, 354) = 15.163, p = .000).

These results were replicated when the six companies were grouped by two media type. Since New York Times had exceptionally longer sentence length, the mean difference between newspapers and Internet sites was reduced based on media type. The mean difference, however, was also statistically significant (See Table 2; t (358) = -2.541, p <. 05).

Reading Ease Score

The average overall readability ease score for these six business news sources was in the range of "difficult" (30 to 50) in the Flesch scale. While three Internet news sources showed quite similar results of reading ease score (CBS MarketWatch, M = 40.4, SD = 10.2; CNBC, M = 39.4, SD = 10.4; CNNfn, M = 37.1, SD = 12.6), newspapers showed different results. WSJ and USA Today showed considerably high scores, 48.3 (SD = 13.9) and 47.0 (SD = 10.7) respectively. The mean score for NYT, however, was 36.2 (SD = 12.1), which was the lowest score among the six. This result was significantly different in ANOVA test (See Table 1; F (5, 354) = 11.097, p = .000).

When regrouped by media type, Web site news were more difficult to read than newspapers. The overall mean for newspapers of 43.8 (SD = 13.6) and mean for Web sites of 38.9 (SD = 11.2) correspond to what Flesch terms "difficult" reading. Its difference was statistically significant in t-test (See table 2; t (358) = 3.744, p = .000).

Grade Level

The grade level also showed difficulty in reading business news. The overall mean of Flesch-Kincaid grade level for six business news was 11.3 grade (*SD* = 1.2). While NYT showed the highest grade level (*M* = 11.8, *SD* = .53), WSJ showed the lowest level (*M* = 10.5, *SD* = 1.8) among the six business news sources. The difference among six media showed significant difference in ANOVA test (See Table 1; *F* (5, 354) = 14.179, *p* = .000).

When regrouped by media type, the overall mean for newspapers was 11.0 (*SD* = 1.56) and mean for Web sites was 11.6 (*SD* = .83). It also showed a significant difference in statistics (See Table 2; *t* (358) = - 4.731, *p* = .000).

Since the Flesch-Kincaid grade level test has a maximum of 12th grade level, it doesn't show the college level. The articles that have scores between 30 and 50, which is "difficult" description style and college level in reading ability, were computed. While WSJ had twenty six articles out of sixty, the other newspapers and Web sites had more than 50 % articles that belong to 30 - 50 score level.

Another computation revealed that business news is highly above in standard reading ease level. The score less than 30 means that it is "very difficult" style and college graduate level. New York Times and CNNfn had serious problem in reading ease level. Both media had 18 articles each, which was 30 % of entire articles. Even though the other four versions showed better situation in terms of less than a score of 30, they also had considerably high portion from 8 to 15 %.

Complex Business Terminology

Overall, newspapers had only a few terms that were selected by students as complex. On the other hand, three Web Sites had more complex terminology. The following were selected ones.

WSJ had only one complex term, which was insolvency. New York Times had five, which were mutual fund, B2B, B2C, Treasury securities market, and solvency. USA Today had two, which were Consumer Price Index, and bear market. CBSMW had eight, which were chip, overnight rate, liquidate, passive stakes, ratings of Double-A-Plus, Aa1, Nikkei Average, and call money. CNBC had six, which were options trading, net-interest margin, operating earnings, B2C, mutual fund, and non-attribution rules. CNNfn had nine, which were Nikkei Average, TOPIX index, Consumer Price Index, CAC 40 index, FTSE 100 index, MIB 30 index, AEX index, valuations, and mutual fund.

It should be noted that this results only reflect the college students' reading level.

Visual Difference

The visual types were coded into photos, computer graphics, and data. The data included tables, charts, and graphs. In terms of quantity, the three Web sites used considerably more visuals than the three newspapers did. The number of visuals used in the articles was 70 in CBSMW, 103 in CNBC, and 79 in CNNfn. On the other hand, newspapers showed fewer visuals. Wall Street Journal used 42, New York Times used 56, and USA Today used 38.

While all three Internet news sources mainly used the data visual formats, such as chart, table, and graph, (CNBC, 80.6%; CBSMW, 64.3%; CNNfn, 53.2%), the three newspapers used photos as the main visual type (Wall Street Journal, 73.8%; New York Times, 66.1%; USA Today, 50%). Based on the company, the visual types differences were significant statistically (See Table 3; χ^2 (10, $N = 388$) = 119.744, $p = .000$).

Results based on media type showed apparent differences using visual type between newspapers and Internet news. While 64% of visuals in newspapers were photos, photos accounted for only 16.3% of visuals in on-line news. On the other hand, 22.1% of visuals was devoted to data format in newspapers and 51.5% was allocated in on-line news. It should be noted, however, that the two media types used a similar portion of computer graphic visual (See Table 4; χ^2 (2, $N = 388$) = 96.547, $p = .000$).

Content Difference

Overall three Internet news sties were very close in what they covered. They heavily focused on stock market news: 41.7% in CBSMW, 56.7% in CNBC, and 35% in CNNfn. Other content showed similar results in the three Web sites. For instance, they also often reported individual firm stories following stock news. CNBC devoted 23.3% into individual firm news and CNNfn did 18.3%. Even though CBSMW had 18.3% general economy news, the three Internet sites rarely dealt with other news stories except stock market and individual firm news. In particular, combined across the three web sites, industry news and legal issues were reported the least -- all three gave less than 5%.

On the other hand, the three newspapers showed more diverse content than Internet sites did. In particular, the Wall Street Journal devoted 20.2% in national economy news, 18.3% in international news, and 15% to legal issues and executive news each. International, legal, and executive news in Wall Street Journal were the highest portion among six media companies' coverage. It also covered individual firm and industry news for 8.3% and 13.3% respectively. However, stock and consumer news were hardly seen on the Wall Street Journal front page.

USA Today also covered the national economy very often (21.7%) as did the Wall Street Journal, but the overall coverage was quite different from WSJ. In USA Today, industry news (21.7%) tied with national economy. Following those two categories, executive news (13.3%), individual firm news (11.7%), stock market news (11.7%), and consumer news (10%) were shown. In the New York Times, the most frequently covered area was individual firm news (23.3%). Following this, industry news (16.7%), national economy (15%), and legal issues (13%) were covered (See Table 5; χ^2 (40, N = 360) = 138.590, p = .000).

Based on the eight categories of coverage, the content varies by media type. For the three newspapers, 18.9% of coverage was devoted to the national economy news, 17.2% to the industry news, 14.4% to the individual firm news and 12.8% to the executive news. On the other hand, the three Internet news sites focused 44.4% of content on the stock market news, 18.3% on the individual firm news, and 11.7% on the national economy news (See Table 6; χ^2 (8, N = 360) = 88.047, p = .000).

Discussion

The purpose of the present study was to examine the readability and content differentiation of business news, especially, focusing on the difference between newspapers and Internet News sites. The overall findings of this study suggest that the Internet business news showed a higher grade level in readability. The longer average sentence, low read ease score and higher frequency of complex business terminology also demonstrate the more difficult writing style of the Internet news. It should be noted, however, that the New York Times was very exceptional among newspapers. It showed the longest average sentence, the lowest read ease score, and the highest grade level among the six examined companies.

Although this study focused more on readability of business news, the content difference based on media type also showed significant differences. While newspapers focused on national economy, industry, and executive news, the Internet news devoted more coverage to the stock market and individual firm news. In addition, newspapers primarily used photos, and the Internet news used more graphics such as table, chart, and graph to analyze the data on the economy.

Readability

Every Journalism writing textbook urges students to write articles as concisely as possible. However, both newspapers and Internet news appear more difficult than "standard" reading. This is consistent with previous newspaper readability studies.

The results of readability in the Internet news were found to be higher than that of newspapers in every readability measurement scale. Since the Internet news sites are directed toward the financial information seekers, who have better understanding of background information, detailed explanations often might be not necessary.

The Internet media's primary emphasis on real time information might cause quicker writing and editing and could lead to decreased readability levels when compared to newspaper articles.

Even though all the news of the six companies is far beyond the "standard" level, the Wall Street Journal and USA Today showed higher reading ease scores compared to others. The reading ease score of New York Times appears to be the lowest, and it is close to the "very difficult" level. Since the New York Times is an elite medium and assumes its readers are well educated, it is no wonder. However, the New York Times Company has many media outlets including the Boston Globe and 15 other newspapers. In addition, it has its own Wire service, which spreads its stories to other local subscribers. Its low reading ease articles might frustrate general readers' attempts to understand the news story.

The long sentences of NYT especially seem to be a main reason to cause the lowest reading ease score. According to Flesch, 19 words per sentence is most desirable. The Wall Street Journal and USA Today showed the same number of words per sentence that Flesch suggested. On the other hand, the number of words per sentence of NYT was almost one and half times the desirable amount. Consequently, the grade level of NYT reaches the post college level.

Of course, readability is not the only factor to increase circulation, nor does a more readable item necessarily cause people to read it. Wanta and Gao (1995), for example, found that there is no relationship between reader satisfaction and readability. The Los Angeles Times jumped by 5 percent from October 1999 through March 2000, in part thanks to its new program of distributing the newspaper in partnership with Spanish and Korean language dailies in the Los Angeles area (Barringer, 2000). The industry, however, should notice the audience's basic need for concise and understandable stories.

Content Difference

Product differentiation is the strategy that firms can employ when confronted with competition (Porter, 1980). In the multi channel environment, media firms especially need to differentiate their products from their competitors.

In the overall analysis of content categories, while most coverage of newspapers was devoted to the general economy and industry news, the stock market and individual firm news were main issues in the Internet business news.

WSJ covered the general economy, international trade, legal issues in business world, and executive news, quite intensively. Also, since WSJ isn't as timely as Internet, it compensates for this shortcoming by providing a wider range of stories. In particular, international trade and executive news are the only features that can be shown frequently in WSJ. The reputation of Wall Street Journal as the premier source for business and economics news was shown in this study, not only in the readability but also in content differentiation. It's no wonder that WSJ has the highest circulation and maintains the only successful fee-based Web version newspaper.

In the past, newspaper readers scanned the stock exchange tables more avidly than football news. However, currently someone who checks stock tables in newspapers might be considered to be primitive.

Internet news sites attract audiences with real time stock information, which cannot be provided by newspapers. Even though the stock market news includes difficult terminology and yields difficult readability, real time information is a niche that cannot be achieved by newspapers. They also utilize diverse interactive charts to give detail explanation on stock market. Their usages of visual data surpass by three times that of the newspapers. Visuals attract more attention and convey more information more quickly. Even though the Internet news sites are not desirable in readability, much usage of visuals can overcome the disadvantages. This trend may lead to increases in the usage of visuals in newspapers as well.

This present study examined newspapers and Internet news sites to compare the readability and content differentiation of business news. Even though it found significant differences, other media also provide business news, such as broadcast news, cable news, on-line news service, wire service, and magazine, etc. Future studies may examine business news through these media as well. There are several factors that can be contributed to the readability. For example, font, color and size are also important factors to influence readers in this visual age.

Content difference on media type reflected the product differentiation pursuing different target audience. The Internet news sites focused on stock market news, which appeals to the investors, and used more visuals such as chart, graph, and tables.

This could be an example of media pursuing their own target audience in this multi-media, multi-channel age. As the numerous media try to attract more advertisers by getting more readership and viewership, the content will be more differentiated for the target audience. In this context, this study also provides a foundation for other research to examine the influence of media competition to attract larger audiences.

The impetus for more profit and the possibility of an upcoming economic recession could drive people to pursue even more financial, business, and economic news. The only way to approach the rapidly growing audiences' need for business and economics is to make sure that the content is available and understandable.

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Table 1. Mean Sentence length, Ease score, and Grade level of Six Companies

	WSJ	NYT	USA	CBSMW	CNBC	CNNfn	*F* value
Sentence	19.9	27.7	19.7	23.0	24.7	24.9	15.163 *
	(6.2)	(7.7)	(4.8)	(5.2)	(5.1)	(7.4)	
Score	48.3	36.3	47.0	40.4	39.4	37.1	11.097 *
	(13.9)	(12.1)	(10.7)	(10.2)	(10.4)	(12.7)	
Level	10.5	11.8	10.7	11.6	11.7	11.5	14.179 *
	(1.8)	(.53)	(1.6)	(.64)	(.78)	(1.0)	

Mean (Standard Deviation)

* significant at p < .001

Table 2. Mean Sentence length, Ease score, and Grade level of Two Media

	Newspaper	Internet	*t* value
Sentence	22.4 (7.36)	24.2 (6.03)	- 2.541 *
Score	43.8 (13.6)	38.9 (11.2)	3.744 **
Level	11.0 (1.56)	11.6 (.83)	- 4.731 **

Mean (Standard Deviation)

* significant at p < .05

** significant at p < .001

Table 3. Number and Percentage of Visual Usage in Six Companies

	WSJ	NYT	USA	CBSMW	CNBC	CNNfn	Total
Photo	31	37	19	10	10	21	128
	(73.8)	(66.1)	(50.0)	(14.3)	(9.7)	(26.6)	(33.0)
C.G.	5	5	9	15	10	16	60
	(11.9)	(8.9)	(23.7)	(21.4)	(9.7)	(20.3)	(15.5)
Data	6	14	10	45	83	42	200
	(14.3)	(25.0)	(26.3)	(64.3)	(80.6)	(53.2)	(51.5)
Total	42	56	38	70	103	79	388
	(100)	(100)	(100)	(100)	(100)	(100)	(100)

Frequency (Percentage)

χ^2 (10, N = 388) = 119.744, p = .000

Table 4. Number and Percentage of Visual Usage in Two Media

	Newspaper	Internet	Total
Photo	87(64.0)	41(16.3)	128(33.0)
C.G.	19(14.0)	41(16.3)	60(15.5)
Data	30(22.1)	170(67.5)	200(51.5)
Total	136(100)	252(100)	388(100)

Frequency (Percentage)

χ^2 (2, N = 388) = 96.547, p = .000

Table 5. Number and Percentage of Articles by Category in Six Companies

	WSJ	NYT	USA	CBSMW	CNBC	CNNfn	Total
Economy	12	9	13	11	2	8	55
	(20.0)	(15)	(21.7)	(18.3)	(3.3)	(13.3)	(15.3)
International	11	5	1	5	2	8	32
	(18.3)	(8.3)	(1.7)	(8.3)	(3.3)	(13.3)	(8.9)
Legal	9	8	4	2	2	3	28
	(15.0)	(13.3)	(6.7)	(3.3)	(3.3)	(5.0)	(7.8)
Firm	5	14	7	8	14	11	59
	(8.3)	(23.3)	(11.7)	(13.3)	(23.3)	(18.3)	(16.4)
Industry	8	10	13	1	0	2	34
	(13.3)	(16.7)	(21.7)	(1.7)	(0)	(3.3)	(9.4)
Executive	9	6	8	5	2	1	31
	(15.0)	(10.0)	(13.3)	(8.3)	(3.3)	(1.7)	(8.6)
Stock	2	6	7	25	34	21	95
	(3:3)	(10.0)	(11.7)	(41.7)	(56.7)	(35.0)	(26.4)
Consumer	1	2	6	3	4	5	21
	(1.7)	(3.3)	(1.0)	(5.0)	(6.7)	(8.3)	(5.8)
Others	3	0	1	0	0	1	5
	(5.0)	(0)	(1.7)	(0)	(0)	(1.7)	(1.4)
Total	60	60	60	60	60	60	360
	(100)	(100)	(100)	(100)	(100)	(100)	(100)

Frequency (Percentage)

χ^2 (40, N = 360) = 138.590, p = .000

Table 6. Number and Percentage of Articles by Category in Two Media

	Newspaper	Internet	Total
Economy	34(18.9)	21(11.7)	55(15.3)
International	17(9.4)	15(8.3)	32(8.9)
Legal	21(11.7)	7(3.9)	28(7.8)
Firm	26(14.4)	33(18.3)	59(16.4)
Industry	31(17.2)	3(1.7)	34(9.4)
Executive	23(12.8)	8(4.4)	31(8.6)
Stock	15(8.3)	80(44.4)	95(26.4)
Consumer	9(5.0)	12(6.7)	21(5.8)
Others	4(2.2)	1(.6)	5(1.4)
Total	180(100)	180(100)	360(100)

Frequency (Percentage)

χ^2 (8, N = 360) = 88.047, p = .000

Newspaper

COPY FLOW AT SMALL NEWSPAPERS: LESSONS FOR METROS SEEKING CHANGE?

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COPY FLOW AT SMALL NEWSPAPERS:
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ABSTRACT

Some newspapers are eliminating their copy desks in a move to flatten hierarchies and return to more generalist workers. Often this entails creating small teams of journalists. There is much less role specialization and hierarchy at small newspapers because of staff sizes, therefore they might be models for this large-newspaper trend. A mail survey confirmed that small newspapers (<25,000 circulation) have flattened hierarchies and generalist workers. It also identified three general patterns of copy flow at small newspapers that have no copy desk.

COPY FLOW AT SMALL NEWSPAPERS: LESSONS FOR METROS SEEKING CHANGE?

Introduction

Newspapers like the Wichita Eagle and the St. Paul Pioneer Press have received considerable attention for "blowing up the copy desk" (ASNE, 1997, p. 12). While the trade press treats the idea of putting out a newspaper without a traditional copy desk as a novelty, many small-circulation newspapers do it every day.

The United States has 1,483 daily newspapers, and 70 percent of them have circulations below 25,000 (2000 Editor & Publisher International Year Book). Small newspapers have small staffs, a simple fact with important organizational ramifications.

Copy desks emerged in the late 19th century as the result of job specialization as newspapers added reporters and editors (Solomon, 1995). Where papers remain small, editorial employees continue to be generalists rather than specialists: "Everybody does more" at a community newspaper, according to Jock Lauterer, a former owner-publisher of two such papers (1995, p. 10).

Now managers at a handful of larger newspapers are questioning the role-specialization that brought about the copy desk and are trying new copy management forms often aimed at breaking down barriers between departments (Fink, 1996). One such approach has been the creation of teams to cover specific news categories. Beat reporters whose stories once traveled up a hierarchical chain of command became members of small teams of journalists with a range of skills and specialties. For example, at the Minneapolis Star-Tribune, the urban affairs team consisted of eight reporters, two copy editors, a graphics designer, a photographer, and a team leader. In Portland, the Oregonian's 1994 reorganization replaced the city, metro, and feature desks with four-to-12 person teams (ASNE, 1994).

Team members have broader duties than the traditional beat reporter. For example, members of the Oregonian's health and science team would report and write stories and also evaluate the merit of wire service health and science stories -- a job traditionally performed by copy editors (Russial, 1997). This return to generalist workers and flattened hierarchies harks back to journalism's early days, but it also describes operations at many small newspapers today.

This study examines newsroom organization and copy-handling operations at daily newspapers of less than 25,000 circulation. The purpose is to determine how copy gets from reporter to printed page, to identify how many people are involved in that process and who they are, and to find out how satisfied small-newspaper journalists are with their copy-editing systems. This information could provide a model or models for topic teams at larger newspapers.

Literature Review

Newsroom Organization

There is no one management pattern that fits all modern newspapers. "It's not easy to describe the typical organizational structure of a newspaper news department. That's because no two are organized alike," notes one editing textbook (Baskette, Sissors & Brooks, 1997, p. 35).

Today's newspapers may have a universal desk, where all (or nearly all) copy is edited and placed in the paper; or they may have specialized copy desks for various departments -- national news, state news, sports, business, etc. Smaller papers may have a hybrid system in which sports and features are handled by separate desks but all other copy comes through one main desk (Smith & O'Connell, 1996).

One new editing text (Bowles & Borden, 2000) tells students that the universal desk is most likely at small and medium-sized papers, while most metropolitan newspapers have specialized desks that process copy for particular categories of news (p. 9).

But an older textbook (Lovell, 1980) suggests that smaller newspapers don't use enough copy to keep a full desk busy. Instead, "each subeditor edits the appropriate stories from reporters or wire services," Lovell writes (p. 13).

This researcher's personal experience suggests that all three textbooks are right: There are small newspapers that use a universal copy desk. There are small newspapers where subeditors perform all copy editing functions. And there are hybrids.

Journalism quality

The goal of copy editing -- at large newspapers and small -- is to improve readability and to catch errors. Improvement is desperately needed, according to a national survey by the American Society of Newspaper Editors that explored the causes of ebbing newspaper credibility (Urban, 1999). The survey's No. 1 finding: The public sees too many factual errors and spelling or grammar mistakes in newspapers.

The spelling, grammar, and style errors that help erode credibility are the types of mistakes copy desks are supposed to prevent (Christopher, 1999).

Meyer and Arant (1992) examined the quality of copy editing at 58 news organizations. They used an electronic database to measure editing precision by counting occurrences of certain spelling, grammar, and style errors.

Bodle (1996) examined copy editing as a part of overall editorial quality. He compared community newspapers to student newspapers on measures of readability, interest level, and thoroughness, and concluded that there were few differences between the two types of papers.

Other scholars have attempted to evaluate the quality of a newspaper's overall editorial product. Merrill and Fisher (1980) distinguish between "prestige" papers of closed political systems and "quality" papers of open political systems, then they identify the features of quality papers, including good writing and editing (p. 23).

The Newspaper Advertising Bureau in 1977 asked 667 working editors to rate and rank various attributes that might be associated with quality (Bogart, 1981). Editors of both large and small newspapers agreed the top three attributes were accuracy, impartiality in reporting, and investigative enterprise (p. 195). But small papers placed more importance on civic-mindedness than large papers.

Becker, Beam and Russial (1978) were trying to measure newspaper quality in their secondary analysis of a 1973 survey of New England newspapers. The index of press performance they developed included an evaluation of news presentation based, among other things, on copy desk functions like editing, typography and layout, picture use, headlines, and selection of and play of stories. They also found a strong positive correlation between circulation and performance. In other words, larger papers were judged to be better than smaller papers.

Connery (1989) tried to dislodge the idea that only big newspapers can be quality newspapers. He asked journalists around the country to identify no more than three of the better small dailies in their regions, then used results of that survey and newspaper visits to identify common elements of quality small dailies.

Gladney (1990) examined the "lore of journalism" that large and small newspapers should conform to the same standards. He surveyed 257 newspaper editors to see if they perceived their missions to be the same. He found that small-newspaper editors placed more importance on community leadership, strong local news coverage, and community press standards and less on staff enterprise, professionalism, and comprehensive coverage.

In a follow-up study, Gladney (1996) surveyed both editors and readers to determine the degree to which they agree or disagree about the importance of traditional standards of newspaper excellence. He concluded that readers and editors are in considerable harmony about most standards, including strong local news coverage, accuracy, and good writing.

Theory

Division of labor. Key to classic capitalist theory is the idea of a free market in which individuals can produce and exchange goods and services without restrictions on their use of land, labor, or capital (Goss, 1991). Thus, monopolies are the biggest economic danger to a free-market economy because they distort the operation of the market and drive out small business.

But another line of economic thought (Babbage, 1963; Mill, 1902; Schumpeter, 1954) disputes the notion that a good capitalist economy is one based on entrepreneurial effort and small business, presenting instead the notion that bigger businesses are inherently better because of economies of scale.

One factor contributing to economies of scale is division of labor. As far back as Plato, philosophers have observed the advantages of specialization of labor. The great 18th century Scottish economist Adam Smith observed that division of labor increases productivity because it allows workers to become more proficient at a task through experience and expertise (Smith, 1981).

Bureaucracy. Some 20th century economists focused their attention on organization and control in large firms. One of the key theoreticians in this area, Max Weber (1864-1930), wrote that bureaucracy is "by far the most efficient instrument of large-scale administration" (1947, p.

58) because it reduces production and distribution of goods into efficient, goal-oriented routines. Weber says the bureaucratic model is characterized by hierarchy of authority, a division of labor, and role specialization.

The bureaucratic model is not generally thought to apply to small business. However, Holliday (1995) believes many small firms are in the paradoxical position of despising bureaucracy on the one hand and actively seeking it on the other. Holliday surmises that this may be because small companies are looking for clearly defined, rational procedures as well as wishing to emulate the operations of larger companies.

Small business. If small businesses are not generally bureaucratic, how are they organized? The research that comes nearest to answering this question has focused on the relationships between management and employees.

The Bolton Committee, appointed by the British government in 1971 to study small business, perpetuated a stereotype of small businesses as harmonious workplaces, where management is direct and flexible and employee turnover is low (Goss, 1991, p. 69).

Goss writes that there is little empirical basis for that view, which he calls the "industrial harmony thesis." He proposes instead a four-fold typology of management strategies in small firms based on relationships between managers and employees.

Chapman (1999) questions the use of the word "strategies" in describing the ways small businesses control employees. Rather than following strategies, are small firms "just muddling through on the basis of custom, trial and error and short-term adaptation to problems?" Chapman asks.

The most common way to organize a small business is by function, advises one management textbook (Hodgetts, Kuratko, 1989). One advantage of functional organization is that it groups people together who are doing the same thing, thereby promoting specialization (p. 232).

Businesses also may be organized based on work flow. Hendrickson and Psarouthakis (1998) note that work flow can be organized horizontally or vertically. In a horizontal organization, work is divided by assigning tasks (p. 67). In a vertical organization, work is divided by assigning decisions (p. 66). Much beyond 10 employees, a CEO can no longer coordinate work flow, and some other strategy is needed, Hendrickson and Psarouthakis write.

Large firms often manage growth with bureaucracy, but Hendrickson and Psarouthakis (1998) do not recommend that approach to growing small firms. Bureaucracies leave workers "so far upstream from the end product that mistakes compound many times before the error is caught," they write (p. 74). Instead, they continue, many companies today are experimenting with team training, problem-solving groups, and individual autonomy -- hallmarks of a plethora of management techniques popularized since the 1970s.

New Management Techniques

A wave of structural change swept across newsrooms in the early 1990s (Stepp, 2000). "Papers flattened management, knocked down turf walls, formed teams and redefined titles," writes Stepp (2000, p. 24).

Lewis (1997) observes that newspapers seeking to maximize readership and attract advertisers have moved away from hierarchical newsroom structures toward work teams aimed at improving productivity, product quality, and morale. Gade (1999) notes that the newsroom transformations Lewis describes emphasize the opposite of labor specialization, and "usually involve a broadening of job descriptions, requiring employees to be flexible and learn to do a variety of tasks assigned to the team" (p. 103).

Russial (1998) says technology is actually reversing the very process of work specialization that led to creation of the copy desk more than 100 years ago.

He notes that in traditional organizations, workers perform highly specialized tasks under highly structured supervision. But consultants believe a single worker equipped with the proper information, tools, and training can be just as effective as a specialized worker, according to Russial.

Russial disagrees with this assessment, noting that newsroom employees at smaller newspapers wear many hats. "It would seem that many small papers don't need to re-engineer their copy desks. Is this model appropriate for larger papers?" Russial asks. He says it is not, because large newspapers can and should set higher standards.

Russial also observes that the move to re-engineer the copy desk includes a presumption that reporters can add the same value to the product as the copy editor by submitting copy that doesn't need copy editing. He dismisses the idea, noting that the abilities of copy editors differ from those of reporters.

Hypotheses and Research questions

Little information exists on how small newspapers move copy from reporter to print, the fundamental question behind this study. The search for that answer leads to these specific research questions:

RQ1: Is it common for small newspapers to have no copy desk?

RQ2: At newspapers that lack a copy desk, who edits local copy?

RQ3: How many editors handle a single piece of copy?

RQ4: How satisfied are small-newspaper editors with editing quality?

The literature also suggests the following hypotheses regarding work organization:

H1: The news employees of small newspapers will be generalists.

H2: Small newspapers will have flattened hierarchies of authority.

Methods

This study takes a snapshot of smaller newspapers by surveying editors and copy editors about their attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors regarding copy flow.

Mail surveys

A self-administered mail survey was chosen to control study costs; because the target population is editors, who are used to reading and responding to written instruments; and because mail surveys are an effective way to gather a great deal of data from a wide geographic area with a minimum expenditure of time (Wimmer & Dominick, 1997, p. 151). These advantages of a mail survey seem to offset the chief disadvantage of the method, a low response rate.

Sampling

Editor & Publisher International Yearbook 1998 lists 1,048 U.S. daily newspapers with 25,000 circulation or less. From this sampling frame, a random sample of 200 newspapers was selected. In order to get a sample that fairly represented both the smallest and the largest newspapers in the population, it was decided to stratify the sample for circulation. The two strata used were under 10,000 (first stratum) and 10,001-25,000 (second stratum). There are 618 daily newspapers in the first stratum, 59 percent of the total, and 430 daily newspapers, 41 percent of the total, in the second stratum. Since it was a goal of this study to have ample responses from both strata, 100 newspapers were chosen from each.

To select the sample, the QuatroPro (version 6.01 for Windows) program was used to generate and assign random numbers to every newspaper in both strata. The first 100 newspapers by number in each stratum then were chosen (n=200).

Questionnaire

The questionnaire consisted of both open-ended and close-ended questions, and statements reflecting attitudes and opinions that respondents scored with a five-point Likert scale.

Pilot study

To test the clarity of the questions and identify any other problems with the instrument, 11 editors of small newspapers in Oklahoma that were not part of the sample were asked to complete the survey between mid-August and mid-September, 2000. The pre-tests produced helpful suggestions that were used to refine questions for clarity.

Administration of questionnaire

Two surveys were sent Sept. 18-20, 2000, to the editor of each selected newspaper. In a cover letter, each editor was asked to fill out one survey and give the other to the person at the newspaper most responsible for copy editing. A second cover letter accompanied each survey meant for a copy editor. Self-addressed, stamped envelopes were provided to each respondent for returning completed surveys.

To assure respondent anonymity to the degree required by the University of Oklahoma's Institutional Review Board, surveys were not tracked in any way, although questions were included to identify respondents by job title, state where located, and circulation size. Because it was thus impossible to know who had responded and who had not, reminder post cards were sent to the entire sample two weeks after the survey was sent, Sept. 29-Oct. 4.

The first mailing and the reminder post card produced 54 responses (a 13.5 percent response rate) by Oct. 20. Because of that low response rate, it was decided to add editor names to the outer envelopes and cover letters for a second mailing, which was sent on Oct. 20 to the entire sample (n=400). New cover letters asked those who had already responded to disregard the new mailing.

Results

Of the 400 surveys mailed, 103 responses were received, of which 101 were usable (a 25.3 percent return rate). Newspapers with 10,000-25,000 circulation accounted for 58.4 percent of the usable surveys (n=59); 38.6 percent came from newspapers of less than 10,000 circulation (n=39). Three of the usable surveys did not include circulation information.

Respondents.

Respondents came from most ranks of newsroom employees, from publisher to reporter. Editors and managing editors accounted for more than half of all responses. Table 1 elaborates.

Table 1: Respondents

Job Title	Number	Percent of total
Editors	28	27.7
Managing Editors	26	25.7
City Editors	7	6.9
News Editors	9	8.9
Copy Desk Chiefs	3	3.0
Copy Editors	9	8.9
Other	19	18.8

More than four-fifths of respondents (83.2 percent) could be classified as management. This determination was made by counting as management all those whose job titles were editor, managing editor, city editor, copy desk chief, and news editor. For the 19 respondents who checked other and then supplied their job titles, each survey was examined and it was decided whether the job title was management or non-management. For example, "publisher" and "executive editor" were considered management while "reporter" and "inside page editor" were deemed non-management. This procedure resulted in 84 management respondents and 17 non-management responses.

Of those returning surveys, 61 percent were male and 39 percent female. The respondents were overwhelmingly (96 percent) white.

Newsrooms.

The median range of newsrooms in this study was 11-15 employees. A more detailed breakdown of the number and type of newsroom employees is provided in Tables 2, 3, and 4.

Table 2: Numbers of Newsroom Employees at Newspapers Sampled

Number of Newsroom Employees	Frequency	Percent of Total
1-5	17	16.5
6-10	16	15.5
11-15	18	17.5
16-20	22	21.4
21-30	19	18.4
31-more	5	4.9
N/A	6	5.8

Table 3: Numbers of Full-Time Equivalent Editors at Newspapers Sampled

Number of FTE Editors	Frequency	Percent of Total
1-3	36	35.0
4-6	38	36.9
7-9	17	16.5
10-12	8	7.8
13-15	1	1.0
16-up	1	1.0

Table 4: Numbers of Full-Time Equivalent Reporters at Newspapers Sampled

Number of FTE reporters	Frequency	Percent
1-3	20	19.4
4-6	27	26.2
7-9	22	21.4
10-12	21	20.4
13-15	5	4.9
16-up	4	3.9
N/A	4	3.9

Ownership.

About three-fifths of the newspapers represented by respondents were group-owned (60.2 percent). That broke down to 24.5 percent group-owned public and 35.7 percent group-owned private. Another 37.9 percent were family owned, with five respondents not reporting ownership information.

Hypothesis testing.

H1 predicted that news employees of small newspapers will be generalists. To test this hypothesis, respondents were asked to indicate their agreement or disagreement with four statements using a five-point scale in which 1 represented "strongly disagree" and 5 "strongly agree." Results for each statement are summarized in Table 5.

TABLE 5: Generalist variable

Cronbach's alpha = .77

Responses were arrayed on a five-point scale, ranging from (1) strongly disagree to (5) strongly agree.

	Mean	SD	N
At my paper, newsroom employees must be able to perform multiple journalism tasks.	4.49	.88	97
Reporters at my paper are trained to do some jobs usually done by editors.	3.33	1.28	96

Reporters at my paper sometimes edit copy other than their own.	3.20	1.50	96
Editors at my paper sometimes report stories.	4.07	1.15	97

Responses to the four statements then were grouped in a variable labeled "generalist" (Cronbach's alpha = .77). The mean score for this variable was 3.78, indicating agreement with the generalist variable as well as with each of the four statements that composed the generalist variable.

The generalist variable also was negatively correlated with circulation ($r=-.49$, $p \leq .001$). In other words, as circulation goes down journalists are expected to perform more journalism-related tasks.

Thus the null hypothesis (employees of small newspapers will not be generalists) can be rejected. H1 is supported.

H2 predicted that small newspapers will have flattened hierarchies of authority. Three statements from the survey were used to construct the flattened hierarchy concept, as shown in Figure 6.

TABLE 6: Flattened hierarchy variable

Cronbach's alpha = .73

Responses were arrayed on a five-point scale, ranging from (1) strongly disagree to (5) strongly agree.

	Mean	SD	N
At my newspaper, decision-making is shared with rank-and-file newsroom employees.	3.47	1.15	95
At my newspaper, collaboration is valued.	4.29	.91	96

At my paper, managers believe reporters and editors working together make the best decisions.	4.11	.92	95

Responses to the three statements then were grouped in a variable labeled "flattened hierarchy" (Cronbach's alpha = .73). The mean score for this variable was 3.96, indicating strong agreement with the three flattened hierarchy statements taken as a whole.

There was no significant correlation between the flattened hierarchy variable and circulation (r=-11, p=.28).

As shown in Table 7, agreement with the three statements making up the flattened hierarchy quotient was highest among the under-10,000 circulation group, although all respondents tended to agree or strongly agree with the second and third statements, and they slightly agreed with the first statement. However, the difference between the means of the two circulation groups was not statistically significant (t=.72, p=.47).

Table 7: Flattened Hierarchy: Comparison by Circulation

Responses were arrayed on a five-point scale ranging from (1) strongly disagree to (5) strongly agree.

ALL RESPONDENTS	Mean	S.D.	N
CONCEPTUAL QUOTIENT	**3.96**	**.81**	**97**
LESS THAN 10,000 CIRCULATION	Mean	S.D.	N
CONCEPTUAL QUOTIENT	**4.03**	**.96**	**37**
10,000 AND UP CIRCULATION	Mean	S.D.	N
CONCEPTUAL QUOTIENT	**3.90**	**.73**	**57**

Nor was there a significant correlation between the flattened hierarchy variable and circulation when only group-owned papers were considered (r=.04, p=.77). In fact, there was no correlation between flattened hierarchy and any specific ownership type — group owned-public (r=.05, p=.83), group owned-private (r=.06, p=.74), or family owned (r=.22, p=.21). In other words, respondents feel their small newspapers do have flattened hierarchies, and that feeling prevails regardless of the circulation size of smaller newspapers. H3 is supported.

Research Questions.

Research Question 1 asked how common it is for newspapers to have no copy desk. About three-fourths of all respondents (n=76) said their newspapers have a copy desk. The other quarter (n=25) said their papers do not. Of the papers that have no copy desk, 80 percent (n=20) were from the smaller stratum – newspapers with under 10,000 circulation. Thus circulation above 10,000 is a strong predictor of the presence of a copy desk. These findings are summarized in Table 8.

Table 8: Newspapers and Copy Desks

Circulation	**Yes Copy Desk**	**No Copy Desk**
10,000-25,000	**54**	**5**
Less than 10,000	**19**	**20**
TOTAL	**76**	**25**

This study also explored the size of copy desks at the 76 small newspapers that reported having them. The number of editors assigned to copy desks ranged from 1 to 16, but that range is somewhat misleading. The mean was 2.9 copy editors, and a third of the 76 papers with copy desks (n=24) had only one copy editor. Only five papers had seven or more.

Newspaper circulation was positively correlated with number of copy editors (r=.56, p≤.001). In other words, as circulation rises, the number of copy editors rises. However, there are no significant relationships between the number of copy editors and respondent satisfaction with editing quality on any of six factors --overall (r=.00, p=.99), headlines (r=-.07, p=.58), grammar, (r=.13, p=.27), spelling (r=.15, p=.21), content (r=.10, p=.39), and clarity (r=.03, p=.79).

Research Question 2 asked how newspapers that have no copy desk move copy from reporter to print. Twenty-five respondents said their newspapers have no copy desk, but two of them failed to describe copy flow. Of the remaining 23, there was wide variety in the specifics of copy flow but three general patterns emerged:

Pattern One: Short Track
N=12
Reporter → Editor or Managing Editor

At two of the papers following this pattern, the editor or managing editor places the copy in the paper with no further copy handlers involved. But the other 10 papers following this pattern send copy from editor or managing editor to a paginator or design desk. At five papers, copy is proof-read after the pagination-design stage.

Pattern Two: Hand It Up
N=7
Reporter → Sub-editor → Editor

At the seven papers following this pattern, the editor or managing editor receives copy only after a sub-editor has finished with it. Some papers identify this sub-editor as a section editor. Others call him or her a news editor or city editor. One paper called this person the proofreader. Three papers have a proofreader look at copy after the editor, but the other four send copy straight from the editor/managing editor to the printed page.

Pattern Three: Hand It Across
N=3
Reporter → Sub-editor → Page Designer

At papers following Pattern Three, the editor/managing editor is not involved in copy handling. Instead of going up the ladder, copy moves across the newsroom. The steps involved vary. One paper in this group routes copy from reporter to city editor to design desk to proofreader. A second routes it from one reporter to another, then to the news editor and then the design desk. The third sends copy from reporter to city editor to news editor, then back to the city editor and on to another reporter and then a clerk. (It was not clear who in this chain actually performed the page design function, but this paper was grouped in this pattern anyway because of its horizontal copy flow.)

Only one paper, an under-3,000 circulation paper in the East, failed to fit into one of these three general patterns. (That paper listed no editors at all in the copy flow chain, showing copy moving from reporter to reporter to composer.)

Research Question 3 asked how many editors handle a single piece of copy. This study found that newspapers with copy desks averaged 4.1 "reads" of each local news story prior to publication, with a "read" defined as any single editorial employee handling a piece of local copy, including the reporter. (If the same person handled a piece of copy more than once, the second and subsequent times were not counted.) At papers that have no copy desks, the average number of reads was 3.3. The difference is statistically significant ($t=3.22$, $p \leq .001$).

Number of reads is important to many of the newspaper employees sampled. In an open-ended question at the end of the survey, respondents were asked to name factors contributing to editing success at their newspapers. More of them mentioned "many reads" ($n=22$) than any factor except "experienced workers" ($n=26$). While this qualitative analysis can not be generalized to the entire sample or to all small newspapers, it does suggest that many small-newspaper employees believe that performance on specific copy editing tasks (catching errors in fact, spelling, grammar, and style, for example) improves as more people read local news stories.

However, another finding calls that belief into question. To determine if more reads produced greater satisfaction with editing quality, a correlation analysis was performed. Surprisingly, there was a negative correlation between number of reads and satisfaction with overall editing ($r=-.22$, $p\leq.05$).

Research Question 4 asked how satisfied small-newspaper employees were with editing quality. Respondents were asked to rate the editing of their newspapers as excellent (0), good (1), fair (2), or poor (3). Both papers with copy desks and those without rated their overall editing as falling between good and fair. For papers with no copy desks, the mean score for overall editing was 1.36 compared to 1.18 for newspapers with copy desks. This difference was not significant ($p=.22$). There also was no significant difference, as shown in Table 9, between the groups regarding respondents' perception of their paper's ability to catch spelling, grammar, and content errors; to write headlines; or to improve clarity.

Table 9: Satisfaction with Editing: Comparison of Papers With and Without Copy Desks

Responses were arrayed on a four-point scale, with excellent coded 0, good 1, fair 2 and poor 3.

	With Copy Desk N=76		Without Copy Desk N=25			
Editing Satisfaction	M	SD	M	SD	t	p
Overall	1.18	.61	1.36	.64	-1.24	.22
Clarity	1.30	.69	1.44	.82	-.82	.41
Content	1.30	.71	1.04	.74	1.59	.12
Grammar	1.16	.71	1.16	.69	-.01	.99
Headlines	1.14	.58	1.12	.67	.18	.86
Spelling	1.04	.68	.96	.61	.52	.61

It was assumed that management respondents would rate editing satisfaction higher than non-management respondents, but there were no significant differences between the means of the two groups on any of the editing variables, as shown in Table 10.

Table 10: Satisfaction with Editing: Comparison of Management and Non-Management

Responses were arrayed on a four-point scale, with excellent coded 0, good 1, fair 2 and poor 3.

	Management N=84		Non-Management N=17			
Editing Satisfaction	M	SD	M	SD	t	p
Overall	1.25	.58	1.12	.78	.81	.42
Clarity	1.39	.68	1.06	.90	1.75	.08
Content	1.26	.73	1.12	.70	.75	.46
Grammar	1.14	.68	1.24	.83	-.49	.62
Headlines	1.14	.60	1.12	.60	.16	.88
Spelling	1.04	.63	.94	.83	.53	.59

Discussion

This study suggests that more than 50 percent of this country's smallest daily newspapers -- those with under 10,000 circulation -- put out their product each morning or afternoon without aid of a copy desk. They do it by giving traditional copy editing jobs like technical editing, headline writing, and page layout to someone who also has other newsroom duties.

This is the essence of what some metro papers are trying to do by "blowing up" their copy desks, giving everyone broader job descriptions and scattering copy editors among various reporting teams. In this respect, it would behoove metro change agents to take a close look at their suburban and country cousins to see how things work without a desk.

Based on this study, it appears they would find flat hierarchies and generalist workers who perform whatever journalism job is most pressing at the moment. Based on this study, it appears they would find a pervasive belief in the idea that error-free copy is the result of many people reading a story. Thus they might see anyone from reporter to publisher to clerk corralled to read copy on deadline.

Metro change agents might detect some editing errors in the published small newspaper, but based on this study, it appears they also would find a newsroom crew that was pretty pleased with its effort. If asked, the small-newspaper journalists, as a group, would rate the editing of their papers as good to fair.

In the hope of emulating this self-satisfaction, should metro change agents race home to tear down their copy desks? Should they replace copy editor-specialists with anyman-generalists? To do so too hastily might be a mistake. This study suggests an underlying contradiction at small newspapers that bears further study: While journalists surveyed seem to believe that editing improves as more people read a story, those journalists at newspapers with more reads for each story are actually less satisfied with editing quality than those at newspapers with fewer reads per story.

The mean number of reads reported by all respondents was 3.68. More important, this study found that newspapers with copy desks averaged 4.05 reads, compared with 3.30 reads for papers with no copy desk. The difference was significant at the 99 percent confidence level. This means that local news stories are read by more people prior to publication at newspapers with copy desks than at newspapers without copy desks.

If more reads equals better editing (as many assume), and if copy desks produce more reads per story, it should follow that copy desks produce better editing. While it was beyond the scope of this study to measure editing quality objectively, respondents were asked to rate editing quality at their papers, producing a subjective measure. Contrary to expectation, there was a negative correlation between number of reads and satisfaction with overall editing (r=.-22, p=.03). In other words, as the number of reads goes up, satisfaction with overall editing goes down slightly.

What does this mean? It is possible that newspapers that care deeply enough about editing quality to add copy readers are simply more self critical. It also is possible that small newspapers are unable to hire and retain qualified copy editors, and that untrained, inexperienced editors make copy worse instead of better. In other words, it might be that more is not better when it comes to editing; that specialists like editors and copy editors add value to the product that non-specialists – even in multiples – cannot.

Newspapers organize copy desks as a way to manage circulation growth and newsroom employment growth (Solomon, 1995). While nothing in the literature predicts a circulation or newsroom size at which copy desks are typically formed, they are so common at metro newspapers that it is news when such a paper tries to do without one (ASNE, 1997).

Holliday (1995) notes that small businesses, in their search for clearly defined, rational procedures, usually wish to emulate the operations of large companies. There is evidence of this in the ranks of small newspapers in this study: While 51.3 percent of the very smallest newspapers have no copy desk, the percentage drops to 8.5 percent in the 10,000-25,000 circulation group. This suggests that small newspapers typically adopt this organizational feature of larger newspapers as soon their circulations and staffs grow large enough to allow it.

Circulation also is a good predictor of copy desk size. This study found that as circulation rises, the number of copy editors rises (r=.56, p≤.001).

Since copy desks and their specialized workers were added to newsrooms to improve editing, it was expected that respondents from newspapers with copy desks would express greater satisfaction with editing at their papers than would those at papers without copy desks. It was further expected that the larger the copy desk, the greater would be the satisfaction with editing. Neither supposition was supported. Respondents from papers with copy desks and those from papers without copy desks consistently rated their papers' editing abilities between good and fair. Differences between the two groups were not significant. Nor was there a significant correlation between number of copy editors and overall editing satisfaction ($r=.00$, $p=.99$).

These findings were unexpected and led to speculation that editors might be reluctant to rate their own work critically. Therefore, it was decided to compare responses of management employees to those of non-management employees. With choices ranging from 0 (excellent) to 3 (poor), management rated overall editing 1.25, compared to 1.12 for non-management. This difference was not significant ($t=-.81$, $p=.42$). Nor were there any significant differences between management and non-management on any of the specific editing factors. The lack of significance might be attributable to the small number of non-management responses ($n=17$), although further research would be required to make that determination.

Another goal of this study was to identify how small newspapers that have no copy desk move copy from reporter to print.

Businesses are typically organized by function (Hodgetts & Kuratko, 1989) or by work flow (Hendrickson & Psarouthakis, 1998). A functional organization is one that groups together people who are doing the same thing, thus promoting specialization. A newspaper is organized functionally when reporters occupy one section of the newsroom, the sports desk another, and the city desk and copy desk sit near the center. Work flow organization, on the other hand, divides work either by assigning tasks (horizontal organization) or by assigning decisions (vertical organization).

Since it was assumed for this study that small newspapers would not be promoting specialization of labor, it was expected that newspapers with no copy desk would have either horizontal or vertical organizations based on work flow. This study found evidence of both. Of the three patterns that emerged among the 22 valid responses from newspapers with no copy desks, two are clearly vertical organizations and one is a horizontal organization.

Pattern One, labeled the "Short Track," was the most common organization (n=12). In this very vertical pattern, the editor or managing editor wields all the decision-making power. The reporter hands copy to this editor, who either places it in the paper or hands it back down to a paginator or design desk for placement.

Pattern Two, labeled "Hand It Up," is also a vertical organization. In this case, copy flows from reporter to a sub-editor before reaching the editor or managing editor for final changes. Seven papers fit this pattern, and at four of them, no one else handles the copy after the editor/managing editor. (The other three use a proofreader as a final check.)

Pattern Three, labeled "Hand It Across," is a horizontal organization. The three papers that fit this pattern route copy across the newsroom between somewhat evenly ranked employees. Typically, the reporter passes his or her copy to a sub-editor who then gives it to a page designer.

Because of the small sample size (n=22), this study was unable to determine which of these three patterns produced the most satisfaction with editing. All three patterns produced editing quality ratings that fell between good and fair.

Conclusion

This study began with a single question: Is there something that metro newspapers dismantling copy desks and organizing teams could learn from small newspapers? The answer is maybe. Although limited by a disappointing response rate, this study confirmed that small-newspaper journalists are, indeed, generalists, and do, indeed, work in flattened hierarchies. It also identified three patterns of copy flow without a copy desk.

That is a beginning. But if small newspapers are to become models for large-newspaper teams, more information is needed. Two questions seem most critical:

- Which copy flow pattern works best given other variables like number of newsroom employees or circulation size?
- Can any no-copy-desk pattern meet the higher product standards to which large newspapers are held?

Small newspapers need this information to organize their work flow in the most productive way possible. And large newspapers need it as they scramble for ways to shore up sagging circulation and credibility.

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The scope and nature of Newspaper in Education programs:
A national survey

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RUNNING HEAD: NIE Survey

The scope and nature of Newspaper in Education programs: A national survey

ABSTRACT

Even though there are fewer participating newspapers than in 1992, NIE programs now reach an estimated 14.4 million students, up 33 percent. More than twice as many newspapers provide school copies free of charge, thanks to the growing role of sponsors. An increasing emphasis on circulation is apparent: Circulation departments are now primarily responsible for 69 percent of NIE programs, and newspapers are much more likely to rate "immediate circulation gains" as an extremely important reason for the program.

Introduction

Newspapers in Education (NIE) is one of the nation's largest partnership programs between schools and private industry. Through NIE, schools get newspapers for classroom use free or at a reduced rate, often with special curricular materials and teacher training workshops.

The program is widely regarded as a win-win proposition. Schools get current materials that may improve students' reading (Edfeldt, 1990) and writing (Ringler and Rhodes, 1990). Newspapers get to claim a larger circulation in the short term, and they hope that boosting students' attitudes toward newspapers (Lentnek, 1997) and reading (Alpert, 1991) will cultivate them as future subscribers. The short-term and long-term goals are not mutually exclusive, but they can clash. Focusing on the reading curriculum can divert resources away from short-term gains, and vice-versa.

The 1980s and early 1990s saw a boom in NIE programs nationwide, an expansion documented in two national surveys commissioned by the American Newspaper Publishers Association Foundation (now known as the Newspaper Association of America Foundation), one in 1989 and one in 1992 (Newspaper Association of America Foundation, 1993). However, there had not been a national survey since -- until now.

The larger media landscape has certainly changed in the last decade. Hundreds of newspapers have consolidated or closed their doors since 1992 (see Tables 1 and 1a), and newspapers have continued to lose readership nationwide. Corporate ownership has become more concentrated and more profit-oriented, raising questions about the extent to which NIE will be able to pursue an educational mission. Anecdotal evidence has suggested that NIE programs have increasingly turned to sponsors to help underwrite their costs.

Given these changes, it seemed to the researchers that another national survey was needed in order to get an accurate picture of the nature and scope of NIE programs in the 21st century. Specifically, we wanted to find out how widely used the NIE program is. How many newspapers have such a program? How many schools use it? How many teachers? How many students? Moreover, we wanted to examine what may have changed in:

- the level of service NIE programs provide
- which departments are running the programs
- the level of resources that newspapers are committing to the programs
- the extent of outside sponsorship
- the goals of the programs.

With the help of the Newspaper Association of America Foundation, this research undertook a national survey of daily newspapers in an attempt to answer these questions.

Newspapers in Education:
History, purpose and recent developments

The idea of using newspapers as a teaching tool goes well back before the inception of formal programs run by the papers themselves. "Recorded references to the use of the newspaper in the classroom go back to the 1890s" (Haefner, 1967, p. 6). Educators' associations advocated this practice themselves for years. Newspaper companies first got involved in the late 1930s when the Milwaukee Journal sponsored and distributed a book about using newspapers to teach current events; the New York Times sponsored a similar book 10 years later (Cowan, 1978).

The acknowledged father of the Newspaper in the Classroom program, as it was originally called, was a circulation manager, C.K. Jefferson (Haefner, 1967). In 1955, Jefferson urged the International Circulation Managers Association to study ways to augment school use of newspapers and develop newspaper reading habits in children. The resulting study found that 40 percent of schools in a national survey used newspapers in some way, but perhaps not the most effective way (Moeller, 1957).

In 1959, the ANPA agreed to sponsor the newly created Newspaper in the Classroom program, and the ANPA Foundation began administering it in 1961; by 1978, NIE had grown to include more than 500 daily newspapers, Cowan (1978) noted, but the program still covered just 10 percent of the nation's schools. In the ANPA Foundation's 1992 survey, 547 newspapers responded that had some form of NIE program. Those programs reached more than 8 million students; in all, the program was estimated to reach more than 10 million.

The surveys commissioned by the ANPA Foundation also assessed the purposes and resources behind the nation's NIE programs. From the start, NIE was considered part of the ANPA Foundation's first goal: "develop informed and intelligent newspaper readers." The cultivation of future newspaper readers continued to be the one most frequently cited in the ANPA's 1992 survey: 82 percent of respondents said it was "extremely" important. By comparison, immediate circulation gains were considered "extremely" or "very" important by 62 percent of respondents in 1992; still, this was up from 49 percent in the 1989 survey. NIE began as a circulation manager's initiative, and the circulation department was primarily responsible for 47 percent of responding NIE programs in 1992.

Staffing for NIE was still low in 1992. Sixty-four percent of newspapers with NIE programs had no full-time staff devoted solely to NIE, and 19 percent didn't have any part-time staff. Among newspapers without NIE, 59 percent of responding newspapers cited lack of budget as the reason, up from 30 percent in 1989.

Resources offered to schools in 1992 included instructional materials (90 percent of respondents), newspaper tours (86 percent), guest speakers (78 percent) and teacher training (73 percent), some of which were for credit (32 percent). Only 6 percent of newspapers charged for instructional materials.

Twenty percent of respondents didn't charge schools for newspapers in 1992, but this practice varied considerably by the size of the newspaper. Almost half of newspapers with circulations of under 15,000 provided free school copies, compared to just 5 percent of papers over 100,000. Business sponsors played the largest role in underwriting the costs of those newspapers; 69 percent of respondents said businesses helped pay for school copies.

This was the most recent look we had at NIE – until now.

Methodology

Population and survey sample

The population for this study was daily, general-interest, community-based newspapers with paid circulation in the United States. A Newspaper Association of America database provided a nearly exhaustive list of about 1,400 such papers.

All of the newspapers in the NAA database with circulations greater than 15,000 were included in the sample. These newspapers were the ones most likely to have NIE programs, and they account for the overwhelming majority of the nation's NIE circulation. Of the newspapers with circulations of less than 15,000, half were randomly selected. A cross-check with an Audit Bureau of Circulation list came up with perhaps a dozen more newspapers. Five large weekly newspapers with NIE programs were included in the interests of getting as complete a count as possible.

In all, surveys were mailed to 1,016 newspapers. The mailing was addressed by name to the publisher or chief operating officer of each paper in March 2000. A follow-up postcard was sent to NIE coordinators about six weeks later. In late May, a researcher began calling the 90 newspapers with circulations over 50,000 that had not yet responded. Duplicate surveys also were sent by fax and e-mail. After follow-up efforts, 436 surveys were returned, for a response rate of 42.9 percent.[1]

Instrument

The survey was four pages long. It was modeled largely on the ANPA's 1992 survey to allow for comparison of findings. The questions asked for NIE circulation information; number of schools, teachers and students participating; cost of newspapers and who pays for them; services and content provided; department responsible, as well as NIE staffing, salary and budget information; program goals and means of evaluating effectiveness; and uses of research.

Additional data

In addition to the survey data, circulation data was obtained for 98 percent of the papers in the population through an ABC database and Standard Rate and Data Service

(1999). The ABC database also provided data on "school copies" and households for almost half of the population. These data, in conjunction with the survey data, provide a clearer picture of the scope of NIE programs and permit a more informed estimate.

Results

Pattern of responses

Table 2 breaks down the population into 36 categories based on 1) whether they were sampled, whether they responded, and whether they had NIE, 2) newspaper circulation size, and 3) whether the papers used the Audit Bureau of Circulation, and if so, whether the papers listed school copies in their ABC reports. A glance at the table shows that the vast majority (95.6 percent) of the newspapers that responded to the survey did, in fact, have NIE programs. However, the majority of newspapers didn't respond, and the greatest proportion of non-responses was from small, non-ABC newspapers, those least likely to have NIE programs. It appears that a response bias is present.

Tables 3 and 3a show the estimated distribution of NIE programs according to circulation category in 2000 and 1992. The 2000 estimates are based on ABC data, our survey data, and the results of a brief telephone survey of 100 small, non-ABC papers that did not respond to our survey. They show that the larger a newspaper is, the more likely it is to have an NIE program. They also show that newspapers of all sizes were more likely to have NIE programs in 2000 than in 1992. These tables provide some data to help correct the response bias. The estimates of likelihood to have an NIE program were used to weight the estimates that follow.

Scope

This section presents our best estimate as to the scope and reach of NIE programs in the United States today. The first step is the raw data from the newspapers that answered our survey, which accounts for most – but not all – of the nation's NIE circulation. Next comes information from supplementary data and regression estimates for non-responding papers. Finally, these estimates are weighted for likelihood of having NIE programs. See Table 4.

The first step is the raw data for the 417 responding newspapers who had NIE programs. Summing their responses, NIE participation totaled 77,035 schools, 280,142 teachers and 10.4 million students. These numbers by themselves represent significant increases from the raw data of the 1992 study. Even though that survey included responses from almost 550 newspapers that had NIE programs, the grand totals were lower in 1992: 67,438 schools, 183,854 teachers and 8,277,100 students. However, the raw data shouldn't be considered a grand total for all of the nation's NIE programs.

Because as many as 20 of the newspapers in this sample left one or more of the questions about students, teachers and schools blank, mean values for newspapers in each circulation and ABC membership category were substituted for missing responses. That accounts for the totals from the "returned-NIE" row in Table 4.

Next, there 309 ABC newspapers that had either not returned the survey or not been sampled. For these papers, we had ABC data on school copies and households in their market as well as total circulation. Using multiple regression with those variables as predictors, the numbers of schools, teachers and students served was estimated.[2] R^2 values were .67, .59 and .55, respectively. The regression estimates were weighted by each category's likelihood of having NIE; for these papers, the likelihood approached 1 because they listed school copies in their ABC reports.

For ABC papers that did not claim school copies, regression predictors were households and total circulation. R^2 values were .67 for schools, .50 for teachers and .42 for students. These estimates, too, were weighted by their category's (quite low) likelihood of having NIE programs. Estimates for non-ABC papers were based solely on circulation (R^2 values of .67 for schools, .50 for teachers and .42 for students[3]) and were weighted by (again, low) category probabilities of having NIE. Similar regression estimates were included for responding newspapers that indicated they were starting programs again; the probability weight for these few cases was 1.

Table 4 shows the totals from these weighted estimates. It is estimated that over 100,000 schools, almost 400,000 teachers and about 14.4 million students participated in NIE programs in 2000. As Table 5 shows, the estimate for number of students is up 33 percent since 1992.

Coverage. Although there are fewer participating newspapers today, their larger programs are more widely available. This can be shown by combining our survey data with data from SRDS and the Department of Education. A research assistant used SRDS data to determine the number of metro areas where at least one NIE newspaper was available. Then, working systematically to avoid duplication, the assistant totaled the population of non-urban counties in which NIE newspapers operated.

Table 6 shows that NIE programs in 2000 were available in areas that include 94 percent of U.S. students, up from 90 percent in 1992. NIE programs also serve a greater percentage of the nation's schools, teachers and students than in 1992; almost a third of American students participated in an NIE program last year, up from 24 percent in 1992.

Nature of NIE programs

Level of service

Intensity of use. The biggest difference here is that schools are using NIE programs for a bigger part of the school year. See Table 7. In 1992, 47 percent of participating schools received NIE copies for at least six months a year, which itself was up from 39 percent in 1989. The 2000 survey shows 76 percent of participating schools were enrolled in NIE for six months or more a year. That, combined with an increase in the frequency of newspaper deliveries to schools, resulted in students getting almost three times as many newspapers in 2000 as in 1992.

Additional services. There are a few differences to report with the 1992 survey. See Table 8. Newspapers in 2000 were somewhat more likely to provide instructional materials and special topic supplements than in 1992. But they were less likely to provide such labor-intensive services as guest speakers or teacher training workshops. The percentage offering lending libraries in 2000 was half of the percentage in 1992.

Cost to schools. The percentage of newspapers providing free copies to schools has more than doubled from the 20 percent reported in 1992. See Table 9. Fully 41 percent said they provided newspapers at no charge, and another 19.7 percent said they provided some newspapers at no charge; they checked the "no charge" box and another box as well.

Sponsorship

Who pays for free copies? Of newspapers who provided some copies free to schools, 94.5 percent had business sponsorships, up from 69 percent in 1992. See Table 10. Individual sponsorships were up dramatically, as well, from 37 percent in 1992 to 71.1 percent. A new option, vacation donation (in which people who temporarily stop their papers donate the cost of stopped papers to NIE), was used by 75.8 percent of respondents. Meanwhile, the percentage of newspapers reporting that they absorbed the cost of school copies was halved, from 33 percent in 1992 to 16.4 percent in the present study.

Respondents were asked an open-ended question about what their newspaper's relationship with their sponsors was. The question was apparently too broad, judging from the number of answers that evaluated the relationship ("Excellent!") rather than describing the nature of it. Still, 23 percent of respondents volunteered that some or most of their sponsors advertised with the paper. The actual percentage is probably higher, although 5.5 percent said that few of their sponsors were advertisers.

Resources provided for programs

Staff. Full-time staffing was up. Table 11a shows full-time staffing for educational services and part-time staffing for NIE in 1992 and 2000. More than half of newspapers with NIE programs in 1992 lacked a full-time worker in educational services, while only a third did in 2000. This survey also showed more full-timers working solely on NIE: 52.3 percent in 2000, compared to 35.5 percent in 1992. Part-time staffing was down slightly, with 73.9 percent of papers having at least one part-timer, compared to 81 percent in 1992. In the current sample, 7.2 percent of NIE programs had no staff.

Overall, the average number of full-time equivalents working in NIE programs rose from 1.6 to 2.1.

Budgets. As might be expected, NIE budgets rose between 1992 and 2000. Table 11b shows that programs in 2000 were half as likely to have no labor costs as in 1992, and they were twice as likely to be in the "over $50,000" category in labor and non-labor costs as in 1992. Thirty-five percent of newspapers were paying an NIE chief more than $30,000 a year, Table 11c shows, compared with 15 percent in 1992. The categorical data does not allow for exact totals. But we can probably work safely with category midpoints (e.g., where a response category is $20,000-$30,000, we can enter $25,000; when there are many respondents, the midpoint should be close to the actual mean, and totals will be similarly close). Doing so, it appears that NIE programs as a whole spent 29 percent more in 2000 than in 1992. This estimate does not include the cost of newspapers, which fewer newspapers are absorbing themselves (see Sponsorship above).

However, as Table 11d shows, in terms of dollars per student reached, newspapers actually spent somewhat less in 2000 than in 1992. The gap becomes more dramatic when expressed in constant 1992 dollars: $4.31 in 1992, $3.34 in 2000. It appears that budget growth kept up with inflation, but not with the increasing reach of NIE programs.

Organizational goals and priorities

Department responsible. Organizational structures make priorities visible, and a shift toward circulation is evident here. Circulation was the department primarily responsible for 69 percent of NIE programs responding, up from 47 percent in 1992. See

Table 12. This shift was most pronounced in the smallest newspapers, where 83 percent of NIE programs are run through the circulation department; in 1992, the figure for this group was 56 percent.

The shift is also evident in the title of the person to whom the NIE head reports. See Table 12. The chief NIE staffer reports to a circulation director at 55 percent of these newspapers, up from 30 percent in 1992. NIE directors were half as likely to report directly to the publisher or general manager in 2000 as they were in 1992.

Program evaluation and research. The percentage of newspapers that evaluate the effectiveness of their NIE programs was almost unchanged, about 68 percent. The bases for evaluation, however, have changed somewhat. See Table 13. Circulation and program growth are used more often, while teacher satisfaction, while still the most common factor in evaluation, is less likely to be used than it was in 1992. The means of evaluation also have changed. Of the 276 newspapers surveyed that evaluate effectiveness, 54 percent used surveys, up from 31 percent in 1992. The percentage relying on feedback was unchanged at 28.6 percent.

A slightly larger percentage of NIE programs reported using research in 2000, 67 percent. Again, see Table 13. Changes in emphasis were slight but consistent with other findings reported here. Compared to 1992, research was more likely to be used to further program growth and less likely to be used for demonstrating the program's educational value.

Accountability/Incentives. Compensation incentives appear to reflect the changing landscape of NIE. See Table 14. For 44.1 percent of chief educational services staffers on surveyed newspapers, pay is tied to program outcomes. For those whose compensation was contingent on outcomes, half (49.7 percent) of those outcomes were circulation- related. The next most common tie (30.9 percent) was to sponsorships, sometimes in the form of commissions.

Reasons for NIE. See Table 15. As in 1992, future newspaper readers were considered by far the most important reason for the NIE program in 2000, cited as extremely important by 86 percent of respondents. That was up from 82 percent in 1992. Community service lost six points over that time (to 42 percent), and awareness of freedom of the press lost five (to 25 percent).

The big change was for the importance of immediate circulation gains. Forty-four percent of respondents considered that extremely important, compared with 28 percent in 1992. (Recall that in 1989, 49 percent of respondents called circulation gains extremely or very important. In 1992, that percentage was up to 62 percent. In this study, it climbs to 84 percent.)

In this survey, two new reasons were presented. "Sense of citizenship responsibility" was called extremely important by 38 percent of respondents. "Image-building," a somewhat more commercial motivation, was cited as extremely important by 44 percent.

Discussion

This survey shows that NIE programs have become fewer, but larger and more pervasive. Although the absolute number of NIE programs has dropped 16 percent since 1992, we estimate that the number of participating students has grown by 33 percent. And those participating students are getting three times as many newspaper copies over the course of the school year.

Compared to 1992, newspapers are more than twice as likely to provide those copies to schools free of charge, but at the same time they're half as likely to absorb the cost of those copies themselves. Individual and business sponsors are playing a much larger role in paying for those copies. The importance of sponsors is reflected in salary contingencies for NIE chiefs: among those whose pay is tied to program outcomes, almost a third are paid to bring in more sponsorship money. But almost half have their pay tied to circulation goals.

Increasingly, it appears, circulation is the name of the game in NIE. Circulation departments are now primarily responsible for 69 percent of NIE programs, and circulation directors are the people to whom the majority of NIE chiefs report. As a reason for NIE programs, circulation has eclipsed community service and awareness of freedom of the press. Considering the low social desirability of "immediate circulation gains" relative to the other loftier-sounding goals, it's remarkable that as many respondents endorsed it as they did. The "true" importance of circulation may well be greater. But the need to cultivate future newspaper readers still is seen as the most important *raison d'être* for NIE. In this respect, little has changed since 1992 – indeed, since the conception of the program.

There are no clear signs that corners are being cut in the drive for circulation. Additional services are about where they were in 1992. NIE staffs have grown almost as much as the program's reach has. Budgets have kept up with inflation, but not with the growth of the program's reach. There may be economies of scale involved with larger programs that let them do more with less, but it's clear that per pupil spending has decreased in real terms – even without considering the costs of newspapers, which fewer newspapers are absorbing.

Conclusion

This research has several shortcomings. In our attempt to account for more of the nation's NIE circulation, we oversampled medium and large newspapers, and we followed up with large nonrespondents more strenuously. That means that our sample as a whole can't be considered representative of U.S. newspapers. To compensate for this shortcoming, we report results by circulation category; we are confident that those results are representative of newspapers in those categories with NIE programs. Happily, the circulation breakdown of the current study is very similar to that of the 1992 survey. A chi-square goodness-of-fit test on the two samples' circulation distribution suggested little difference between the two (Π^2, 3df = 1.05, p>.75), so the comparisons contained in this paper should be valid.

The reader should keep in mind that estimates as to the scope of NIE programs in 2000 are just that: estimates. While we are confident that the estimates are close to the actual numbers of students, teachers and schools participating, they should not be treated as the actual figures themselves. Likewise, our use of categorical data for some measures (such as NIE budget), while probably aiding our response rate to those questions, is not exact. Estimates of budgets and the like are probably close simply because the size of our data set makes it safer to use category midpoints in estimating totals.

The growing emphasis on circulation in NIE deserves both welcome and wary watchfulness. On one hand, it is clear that NIE is reaching more students than ever before, and that is good news. But there are anecdotes about NIE "programs" that do little more than dump the day's overruns at the school steps so they can show advertisers bigger circulation numbers. Similarly, the involvement of sponsors can increase the reach of NIE, but it could devolve into rampant product placement that has little educational value. Fortunately, this study shows no clear signs that these "worst practices" are becoming more prevalent. It is heartening that the top priority of NIE continues to be developing future readers.

Future research should explore the goals of NIE programs in greater depth. What goals are seen as compatible or incompatible with others? How are these goals reflected in organizations? How are these goals pursued? How is achievement toward them measured? How can they best be achieved? For instance, the top goal is developing future subscribers. Is it happening? What evidence is there? What programs are doing the best job of this?

One other line of research might consider NIE from the school's perspective. Although developing future subscribers has long been NIE's top priority, educators have been interested in the potential of the newspaper as a teaching tool for even longer. More research on NIE's educational mission needs to be done – even if only to convince more schools and teachers of its merit.

Notes

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[1] Where newspapers in joint operating agreements or groups did not have separate NIE programs, the joint entity was treated as one unit for analysis.

[2] To avoid collinearity between school copies and total circulation (r=.891), just one of them was used in regression estimates, depending on which predicted better for the dependent variable in question. For schools, total circulation was used; for teachers and students, we used school copies instead. Where we did not have data on school copies, obviously, total circulation was used.

[3] Although it's not evident from the R^2 values, households had a significant beta for schools and teachers in the equation with total circulation, so it was retained where data on households was available.

Table 1: All U.S. daily newspapers-2000

SIZE CATEGORY (Thousands)	NUMBER OF NEWSPAPERS	PERCENT OF TOTAL	TOTAL CIRCULATION (Millions)	PERCENT OF TOTAL
Over 100	107	7.5%	28.1	52.9%
50 – 100	118	8.3%	7.8	14.7%
15 – 50	383	27.0%	11.6	21.9%
Under 15	812	57.2%	5.6	10.5%
TOTAL	1420	100.0%	53.1	100.0%

***Excludes USAToday and Wall Street Journal**

Table 1a: All U.S. daily newspapers-1992

SIZE CATEGORY (Thousands)	NUMBER OF NEWSPAPERS	PERCENT OF TOTAL	TOTAL CIRCULATION (Millions)	PERCENT OF TOTAL
Over 100	141	7.5%	28.2	52.6%
50 – 100	158	7.8%	7.9	14.7%
15 – 50	510	29.3%	11.8	22.1%
Under 15	995	55.4%	5.7	10.6%
TOTAL	1804	100.0%	53.6	100.0%

Source: Newspaper Association of America Foundation (1993)

***Excludes USAToday and Wall Street Journal**

Table 2: Study population by sampling/response, ABC status and size

NUMBER OF NEWSPAPERS

	ABC NEWSPAPERS						NON-ABC NEWSPAPERS			TOTAL
	HAVE SCHOOL COPIES			NO SCHOOL COPIES						
	Large	**Medium**	**Small**	**Large**	**Medium**	**Small**	**Large**	**Medium**	**Small**	
Not Sampled	1	6	65	1	4	78	0	0	269	424
Not Returned	34	158	45	0	29	55	8	14	237	580
Ret – NO NIE	1	3	2	0	3	2	0	0	8	19
Returned – NIE	182	147	22	0	9	14	4	9	30	417
TOTAL	218	314	134	1	45	149	12	23	544	1440

Large = Over 50,000 Medium = 15,000 – 49,999 Small = Under 15,000

Table 3: NIE in U.S. daily newspapers (est.) -2000

SIZE CATEGORY (Thousands)	NUMBER OF NEWSPAPERS	NUMBER WITH NIE	PERCENT OF CATEGORY
Over 100	107	107	100%
50 – 100	118	116	98%
15 – 50	383	334	87%
Under 15	812	393	48%
TOTAL	1420	950	67%

***Excludes USAToday and Wall Street Journal**

Table 3a: NIE in U.S. daily newspapers (est.) -1992

SIZE CATEGORY (Thousands)	NUMBER OF NEWSPAPERS	NUMBER WITH NIE	PERCENT OF CATEGORY
Over 100	141	135	96%
50 – 100	158	150	95%
15 – 50	510	394	78%
Under 15	995	456	46%
TOTAL	1804	1135	63%

***Excludes USAToday and Wall Street Journal**

Table 4: Estimated numbers of schools, teachers and students in NIE programs

	ABC NEWSPAPERS						NON-ABC NEWSPAPERS			TOTAL
	HAVE SCHOOL COPIES			NO SCHOOL COPIES						
	Large	Medium	Small	Large	Medium	Small	Large	Medium	Small	
Not Sampled (Estimated)	314 472 14,839	289 1,215 39,564	1,044 6,847 246,681	0 0 0	56 122 4,137	386 1,154 36,944	0 0 0	0 0 0	867 3,735 117,248	2,956 13,545 459,413
Not Returned (Estimated)	11,566 41,053 1,717,509	9,106 26,513 920,883	705 4,174 152,624	0 0 0	0 0 0	0 0 0	No basis for estimate	28 108 1,660	368 1,621 50,542	21,773 73,469 2,843,218
Ret. – NO NIE (Estimated for start-up programs)	0 0 0	133 250 9,244	20 91 3,585	0 0 0	0 0 0	15 64 1,980	0 0 0	0 0 0	9 52 1,539	177 457 16,348
Returned – NIE (Actual figures, with cell mean substitution for missing values)	69,621 259,156 9,901,480	8,603 25,859 910,100	538 1,624 68,026	0 0 0	192 459 12,701	138 878 26,225	920 2,575 83,300	259 705 22,821	678 1,906 39,839	80,949 293,162 11,064,492
TOTAL	81,501 300,681 11,633,828	18,131 53,837 1,879,791	2,307 12,736 470,916	0 0 0	248 581 16,838	539 2,096 65,149	920 2,575 83,300	287 813 24,481	1,922 7,314 209,168	105,855 380,633 14,383,471

In each cell, the top number is for schools, the middle number for teachers, and the bottom number is for students

Large = Over 50,000 Medium = 15,000 – 49,999 Small = Under 15,000

Table 5: Estimated reach of NIE Programs – 1992 and 2000

	Total		Y2000 (by Size Category)			
	1992	2000	<15K	15-50K	50-99K	100K+
Schools	84,877	105,855	7,518	19,096	25,510	53,731
Teachers	294,794	380,633	22,115	60,786	95,577	202,155
Students	10,822,100	14,383,471	745,233	1,921,110	3,695,913	8,021,215

Table 6: Coverage of NIE Programs – 1992 and 2000

	Total	
	1992	2000
Percent of elementary and secondary students living in an area served by an NIE program	90%	94%
Percent of elementary and secondary schools participating in an NIE program	31%	40%
Percent of elementary and secondary teachers participating in an NIE program	26%	35%
Percent of elementary and secondary students participating in an NIE program	24%	32%

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Table 7: Intensity of NIE programs – 1992 and 2000

	Total		Y2000 (by Size Category)			
	1992	2000	<15K	15-50K	50-99K	100K+
LENGTH						
less than 3 mo.	38%	13%	16%	7%	10%	15%
3 – 6 months	15%	11%	5%	10%	10%	13%
6 – 9 months.	9%	13%	10%	14%	13%	15%
full school year	38%	63%	69%	69%	67%	57%
FREQUENCY						
at least weekly	55%	57%	66%	56%	54%	55%
more than 1/wk	16%	22%	21%	21%	22%	24%
daily	11%	15%	19%	13%	13%	16%
NEWSPAPERS						
average copies per delivery	23.3	44.8	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
BOTTOM LINE						
Avg. number of copies/ student per year	5.3	15.4	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a

Table 8: Additional NIE services – 1992 and 2000

Pct. of Programs that Provide	Total		Y2000 (by Size Category)			
	1992	2000	<15K	15-50K	50-99K	100K+
Instruction materials (e.g., teacher guides)	90%	94%	78%	93%	100%	100%
Special topic supplements	56%	70%	41%	61%	84%	89%
Training workshops for teachers	73%	65%	27%	61%	82%	92%
guest speakers to schools (not NIE staff)	78%	61%	32%	59%	76%	74%
lend films, videos, books etc.	28%	14%	14%	14%	18%	13%
Other* support for schools	22%	22%	16%	21%	22%	32%
Internet	0%	62%	38%	52%	76%	78%

*Includes promotional activities, recognition events, and newsletters

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Table 9: Schools' price for newspapers – 1992 and 2000

Pct. of Programs that Charge:	Total		Y2000 (by Size Category)			
	1992	2000	<15K	15-50K	50-99K	100K+
Half of single copy price	36%	13%	8%	13%	14%	18%
Half of carrier delivery price	19%	19%	9%	16%	27%	23%
Less than half price	4%	4%	5%	5%	2%	3%
No cost to school	20%	41%	71%	45%	32%	22%
Some free, some not	n/a	20%	5%	20%	22%	30%
Other	20%	3%	3%	2%	3%	4%

Table 10: Who pays for free copies? – 1992 and 2000

Pct. of Programs that Rely on:	Total		Y2000 (by Size Category)			
	1992	2000	<15K	15-50K	50-99K	100K+
Individual sponsors	37%	71%	63%	80%	66%	66%
Business sponsors	69%	95%	94%	98%	87%	98%
Parent/teacher organizations	14%	13%	6%	10%	19%	21%
Vacation donations	n/a	76%	51%	78%	83%	91%
Newspaper absorbs cost	33%	16%	20%	19%	19%	4%
Other	6%	15%	10%	16%	17%	17%

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Table 11a: Staff for NIE programs – 1992 and 2000

Pct. of Programs with ___ Staff	Total		Y2000 (by Size Category)			
	1992	2000	<15K	15-50K	50-99K	100K+
Full-time						
none	53%	34%	78%	44%	10%	5%
1	35%	42%	18%	51%	70%	20%
2 or more	12%	24%	4%	5%	20%	75%
Part-time						
none	19%	27%	17%	28%	33%	23%
1-2	53%	54%	56%	45%	28%	23%
3 or more	28%	19%	27%	27%	39%	54%
average FTE's	1.6	2.1	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a

Table 11b: Budgets for NIE programs – 1992 and 2000

Pct. of Programs with __ Budget	Total		Y2000 (by Size Category)			
	1992	2000	<15K	15-50K	50-99K	100K+
Nonlabor						
Under $10,000	68%	51%	93%	65%	36%	8%
$10 - $25,000	16%	23%	7%	24%	34%	22%
$25 - $50,000	8%	11%	0%	8%	18%	14%
Over $50,000	8%	15%	0%	3%	12%	56%
Labor						
None	35%	18%	41%	19%	2%	2%
Under $30,000	38%	37%	50%	60%	24%	4%
$30 - $50,000	11%	20%	5%	17%	49%	16%
$50 - $100,000	11%	13%	4%	3%	17%	32%
Over $100,000	5%	12%	0%	1%	7%	46%

Table 11c: Base pay for NIE chiefs – 1992 and 2000

Pct. of Programs paying NIE chief	Total		Y2000 (by Size Category)			
	1992	2000	<15K	15-50K	50-99K	100K+
None	47%	28%	57%	36%	9%	8%
Under $30,000	38%	37%	43%	54%	32%	8%
$30 - $50,000	13%	27%	0%	9%	56%	55%
Over $50,000	2%	8%	0%	1%	3%	29%

Table 11d: Resources per student served – 1992 and 2000

	Total	
	1992	2000
FTE Staff per Student Served	.17	.14
Total Expenditure per Student Served:		
Actual Dollars (cost of papers excluded)	$4.31	$4.17
1992 Constant Dollars	$4.31	$3.34

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Table 12: Organization of NIE programs – 1992 and 2000

	Total		Y2000 (by Size Category)			
	1992	2000	<15K	15-50K	50-99K	100K+
DEPARTMENT RESPONSIBLE						
Circulation	47%	69%	83%	69%	66%	60%
Mktg/Promo	21%	14%	3%	14%	19%	18%
NIE/Ed Serv.	16%	10%	10%	9%	9%	16%
News/Editorial	8%	2%	0%	1%	3%	3%
Comm. Rel.	2%	2%	2%	3%	1%	1%
Other	6%	3%	2%	4%	2%	2%
NIE HEAD REPORTS TO						
Circ. Director	30%	55%	54%	60%	56%	46%
Mktg/Promo Dir	12%	19%	2%	15%	30%	26%
Publisher/G.M.	21%	11%	38%	10%	2%	3%
Editor	5%	2%	0%	3%	1%	1%
Comm. Rel.	4%	1%	0%	0%	1%	3%
Other	25%	12%	7%	11%	10%	21%

Table 13: Evaluation of NIE programs – 1992 and 2000

	Total		Y2000 (by Size Category)			
	1992	2000	<15K	15-50K	50-99K	100K+
USE MEASURES TO EVALUATE						
Yes	68%	68%	52%	61%	80%	85%
No	32%	32%	48%	39%	20%	15%
WHICH ONES						
Circulation	33%	41%	14%	33%	62%	53%
NIE Growth	18%	24%	20%	24%	25%	32%
Teach. Satisf.	64%	50%	72%	58%	44%	41%
Internal Perf.	12%	10%	4%	10%	14%	18%
USE RESEARCH						
Yes	62%	67%	31%	35%	44%	80%
No	38%	33%	69%	65%	56%	20%
FOR WHAT						
Prog. growth	39%	42%	35%	38%	44%	51%
Prog. ed. value	44%	37%	10%	35%	40%	41%
Student Perf.	3%	4%	0%	1%	5%	5%
Grads become subscribers	2%	1%	0%	1%	2%	1%

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Table 14: Incentives for NIE chiefs – 1992 and 2000

	Total		Y2000 (by Size Category)			
	1992	2000	<15K	15-50K	50-99K	100K+
USE PAY INCENTIVES						
Yes	n/a	35%	13%	28%	48%	58%
No	n/a	65%	87%	72%	52%	42%
INCENTIVES TIED TO ___						
Circulation	n/a	49%	13%	38%	48%	66%
Sponsorships	n/a	31%	50%	33%	36%	23%
Student Perf.	n/a	3%	0%	4%	5%	3%

Table 15: Importance of reasons for NIE – 1992 and 2000

Pct. Saying ___ is "extremely important"	Total		Y2000 (by Size Category)			
	1992	2000	<15K	15-50K	50-99K	100K+
Immediate Circulation Gain	28%	44%	31%	36%	44%	62%
Future Newspaper Readers	82%	86%	81%	85%	88%	87%
Image building	n/a	44%	37%	49%	46%	37%
Community Service	49%	43%	38%	46%	47%	40%
Awareness of Press Freedom	30%	25%	24%	28%	22%	25%
Sense of Citizen Responsibility	n/a	38%	29%	43%	41%	36%

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